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AGENDA ADJOURNED

THIS fantastic Conference of Foreign Ministers is ending. Its Agenda still included many minor matters upon which disagreement could have been reached, but not apparently the great issues on which the life or death of society depends. The first of these was the control of the production of atomic bombs which, according to the highest scientific authorities, will be within Russian capacity in about two years' time and, before long, within the capacity of any industrial and scientifically equipped country. The other overwhelming issue on which a joint policy for the Great Powers was immediately essential was the economic disintegration of the world, and especially of Central Europe. The Conference, however, gave priority to other matters—the ethnographic composition of Istria, the strategic control of the Mediterranean Narrows, the ownership of Tripolitania, and the Constitution of Bulgaria.

Since men and women go on living and dying while Great Powers jockey for position, economic decisions are in fact taken even while they are not discussed. The Soviet Union apparently assuming that the construction of rival and exclusive spheres of interest is the only possible policy, is rapidly gearing Eastern Europe to Soviet economy. She has concluded a treaty with Hungary by which Russia obtains a 50 per cent. participation in Hungarian industry, and an agreement with Austria which assures her a royalty-interest in Austria's oil supplies. At the same time millions of German refugees from Pomerania and Brandenburg are streaming over the new Polish frontiers into the rump of Germany, dying as they go, and leaving behind them a desert once fertile and productive. In terms of history and short-sighted realism, it is easy to explain, but not possible to justify, this pitiless sacrifice of Europe's life to the strategic interests of the U.S.S.R.

American policy is equally egotistic and, indeed in the Far East, openly Imperialist. Japan is regarded as an American base, to be exploited by United States Business and maintained as a military asset. The Pacific Islands are being developed as American naval and air outposts, and American Imperialists are discussing the exploitation of the Asiatic mainland. The naked fact is that the two Great Power blocks are already grabbing all they can, in exclusive concern with their own strategic interests.

Britain's position is not so plain. In Soviet eyes we are linked with the Americans, and it is true that, when it comes to open dispute, as at this Foreign Ministers' Conference, Britain's vote is apt to go with America's. But in fact we stand between Russia and America. We are a European people, conscious of our economic and cultural ties with the Continent and ready, if the Soviet Union would believe it, for co-operation with Russia in rebuilding Europe. The United States cares little about Europe, though Americans are increasingly impressed with the efficiency of German machinery and the prospect of acquiring her industries. The main hope for the future was for Britain and the Soviet Union to develop with the liberated countries of Europe—all necessarily moving towards Socialism—a common policy of economic welfare, with integrated transport and social services, for the whole Continent. For that policy Russia has always been too suspicious, and Britain too lacking in constructive realism. On the vital question of Europe's water-ways, Mr. Bevin supported Mr. Byrnes' proposals, but Britain and America had ensured Russian suspicion of our intentions in the Danube valley by talking poppycock about political democracy in Balkan States, where the alternative to Communist domination is a return to a White Terror.

The British people and, in particular, the new Labour Party will be hard to convince that there is no alternative to passively accepting the division of the world into rival Anglo-American and Russian blocks. In point of fact Britain is not part of the American Zone, nor are British the same as American interests. At the moment all three Powers are intriguing against each other in the Middle East—the ultimate key to power—and we in Britain are seeking a sphere within which the ancient democracies of Western Europe can live without being crushed between the two colossal continental Powers. Lord Halifax, Mr. Dalton, and Lord Keynes have spoken admirably for Britain in an attempt to explain to the United States that we intend, even at great cost, to maintain our economic independence.

Mr. Bevin, however, seems far too ready to continue the Churchillian policy of backing American ambitions in exchange for American support of an old-fashioned conception of British Imperial interests. The Dominions naturally complain that Britain is participating in Big Power politics without their concurrence.

We do not believe that the discussions on joint problems can be abandoned because the Foreign Ministers are now dispersing, but there will only be hope of success for resumed talks if Britain uses the interval to concert with the Dominions, the French and the small democracies of Western Europe a positive policy of rehabilitation. If, for instance, this group of Powers can agree on a European policy for the Ruhr coal, Continental transport and allocation of food, we can substitute for our negative criticism of Soviet policy an invitation to the Soviet Union to co-operate on practical European proposals.

Who Controls Japan?

Though spokesmen of the State Department have roundly rebuked American generals for predicting a brief Occupation of Japan, it is not clear that the decision has gone against them on the broad issue of policy. There is seemingly no intention to bring about any fundamental alteration in the social structure of this country, though General MacArthur has issued orders which point to the liberation of its press and to the diversion of industry from military purposes to the supply of consumers' needs. The rumours that the Emperor Hirohito may abdicate in favour of his son, a minor, with the reputedly liberal Prince Chichibu as Regent, lack confirmation. It remains to be seen whether America's Allies will now insist on asserting their right to an effective share in the control of Japan. General MacArthur has bluntly said that America's part in it must be "paramount." Australian opinion, which demands a much tougher policy, is restive to the point of indigna-

tion. The Russians, who may well wonder whether American Commanders have any ulterior strategic reason for appeasing Japan, have proposed the creation of an Allied Control Commission. The comments of the Soviet press on America's appropriation of island bases in the Pacific reveal anxiety. In plain words, are American soldiers, in all they do in relation to Japan, making preparations for a Third World War? In French Indo-China, meanwhile, a confused armed struggle is going on in and around Saigon, between weak French forces described as "irregulars," and armed Annamite nationalists. Gurkhas have been called in to repress this movement, which aims at political independence: an even odder detail has been the use of Japanese troops, under British orders, for this purpose. The French have on the spot no forces capable of restoring their rule, which was greedy and unpopular.

Allied Rules for Germany

The proclamation issued this week by the Allied Kommandatur fills in, to some extent, the details of the Potsdam conception of a tough peace for Germany. The Reich is to have no independent relations with other States; the entire German shipping and shipbuilding industries, together with the whole internal transport system, are to be turned over to Allied control; and reparations (including the costs of Allied occupation) are to be "such as the Allied representatives may prescribe," and are to be paid either in kind or by "Labour . . . for use in Germany or elsewhere." Simultaneously General Eisenhower announces that five of Germany's largest industrial undertakings in the U.S. Zone are to be dismantled and exported (to destinations not yet disclosed) as reparations. This is a considerable instalment of "pastoralisation"; but there is no indication whatsoever that the Allies have yet decided, or even decided how to decide, what minimum of industrial plant is "necessary for Germany's peace-time economy." Meanwhile the ban on German political activity in the British Zone has nominally been lifted, and "democratic" parties can be formed. But the regulations imposed on them represent a paralysing form of tutelage: the approval of Military Government must be obtained to their programmes, and to any future modification of them, and their finances and membership lists must be open to constant inspection. While Nazis still remain embedded in the police, in the local administrations and in business executive positions, there seems little sense in reducing to the status of apron-stringed "stooges" the only organisations which can begin the real de-Nazification of Germany.

French Provincial Elections

From last Sunday's first-ballot results in the elections for the *Conseils Généraux* outside the city of Paris, two main features emerge: there is no sign that the Leftward tide of French opinion has ceased to flow, and there is evidence that the electoral victory of a (broadly reformist) Labour Government in Britain has exercised a considerable influence across the Channel. The Left has won a substantial number of seats at the expense of the Socialist-Radicals and the Republican groups of the Right—M. Louis Marin's U.R.D. and the Alliance Démocratique. But the gains have accrued chiefly to the Socialists. In spite (or perhaps because) of their curious tactical *liaison* with the Socialist-Radicals, the Communists—except in the Paris suburbs—have scored relatively modest successes. If the forthcoming General Elections show the same trend as in the municipalities, the Assembly will clearly have a Left majority in which the Socialists will be much the largest single Party. Does this mean that all danger of a clash between the Assembly and de Gaulle will be averted? Not necessarily. The Socialist leaders are inclined to look benevolently on the Head of the State, and will probably seek collaboration in the Assembly with the Gaullist Resistance Groups—the (anti-Communist) U.S.D.R. and the "Leftish," clerical and sharply nationalist R.R.P., which is supported, incidentally, by the Christian Trade Unions. But the Socialist rank and file are distinctly more critical than their leaders are of de Gaulle and, especially, of his personal Cabinet; and the Communist-Radical *bloc*, however uneasy its alliance, will exercise in the Assembly an influence (backed by the semi-Communist Resistance Group, M.U.R.F.) which will not be friendly either to de Gaulle or to the conception of an Assembly with limited powers.

The Next Phase is Spain

It is good news that Mr. Bevin has instructed our Ambassador in Madrid to investigate the reported arrest of the two Communist leaders, Alvarez and Zapirain, who are said to be under sentence of death, and "to make appropriate representations." Their case is, however, only an outstanding instance of the Terror, which continues unabated. The time has come to consider the use of much more direct and effective measures to bring this tyranny to an end—certainly the withdrawal of all economic support, perhaps the withdrawal of our Ambassador, possibly a brusque intervention (in concert with our Allies) at Tangier. The danger is that if Franco is left much longer in control, he will succeed in coming to terms with Don Juan, whom he wishes to restore to the throne under his auspices. The Pretender, on the other hand, prefers to stand on his own feet, or at least to seem to do so. His representative, General Kindelan, now operates openly in Spain and predicts a restoration of the Monarchy within six months; it will camouflage itself in a quasi-liberal disguise and will offer to hold elections based on "organic universal suffrage." This curious phrase may point to some form of corporative Fascism. The real powers behind the Spanish Monarchy are, of course, the Army (meaning its High Command), the Church (meaning its hierarchy) and the great landowners. That any honest form of constitutional democracy could come into being under such auspices is impossible. It is the displeasure of the United Nations which has shaken Franco. It should be made clear to Spaniards that a Monarchy based on the same anti-popular forces will have no better claim to recognition. Meanwhile it is urgent that the moderate Republican Government-in-exile of Dr. Giral in Mexico should broaden its base into a united front.

Anglo-American Oil Pact

Between them Mr. Shinwell and Mr. Ickes have succeeded in devising a formula for "the orderly development of the international petroleum trade" which will satisfy the American oil tycoons, safeguard essential British requirements and lead, very probably, to acrimonious Anglo-U.S. disputes as to its interpretation. In respect to new development rights, e.g., in the Middle East, the "open door" principle of equal opportunity is upheld; and the idea, which wrecked last year's draft agreement in the U.S. Senate, of imposing any sort of international control on "domestic petroleum industry" (i.e., in the U.S.A.) is now disavowed. There is no longer any talk of "fair prices" for oil or of "encouraging" the economic development of producing countries such as Iran, Iraq or Venezuela. Up to this point Standard Oil and its associates score all along the line. There is now, however, an explicit (and welcome) clause providing that either of the two signatories may "enact any law or regulation relating to the importation of petroleum." In plain words, if Britain is short of dollars, she can claim the right to switch her purchases of petroleum (in so far as refinery capacity allows) from the U.S.A. to Middle East countries whose producers are ready to accept sterling in payment. We congratulate Mr. Shinwell on this clause. But how does it square with the definition in the agreement of "orderly development" as trade "on a competitive and non-discriminatory basis"? Apart from the fact that the U.S.S.R. is not a signatory, the pact falls far short of any real international regulation of oil supplies. The establishment is proposed of a permanent, fact-finding International Petroleum Council. This may be useful, but the Signatory Governments expressly reserve the right to ignore the Council's findings.

Next Stage at Washington

The financial debate in Washington continues, and is complicated by uncertainties about the future of the huge sterling balances at present blocked in London and of the pool of dollars held on behalf of the countries of the sterling group. The Indians, in particular, are beginning to press hard for the conversion of a part of their sterling—now well over £1,000 millions—into dollars, which they can use for buying in the United States capital goods which they see no chance of getting from Great Britain for some time to come. They are also complaining that too little is allowed them on account of current exports out of the sterling group's pool of dollars. This makes them look like allies of the Americans in demanding an early removal of currency restrictions; but in fact the harder the Americans drive us in the Washington bargaining, the less able shall we be to release any of the blocked sterling, either for India or for any other creditor. A telling document, comparing Great Britain's war sacrifice with those of the United States, has found its way into print, though it was handed privately to the American negotiators and, apparently, withheld from publication at their requests. This document shows, *inter alia*, that 55 per cent. of Britain's man-power was mobilised for the Services or for war production, as against 40 per cent. in the United States; that British deterioration of capital plant in non-war industries was from two to three times America's; that Great Britain's loss of external investments was 35 times that of the United States; and that Great Britain's total war expenditure was half as big again as America's, despite the great difference in resources. The trouble is that Congress is apt to look less to the past than to the future interests of American business.

A Coming Clash?

There is likely to be trouble over the Industrial Injuries Bill when it comes before Parliament next month, unless the terms of the existing draft are considerably modified. The Bill, of course, is a legacy from the Coalition, and represents the opening instalment of the Coalition Government's version of the Beveridge Plan. At the Trades Union Congress Mr. Allen, speaking for the General Council, said the Bill must be opposed unless its terms were improved, and probably most of the back-bench M.P.'s will be disposed to agree with him. The main questions at issue relate to the scales of benefit. The T.U.C. wants the rate for total disablement to be 60/- instead of 40/-, and objects to injury benefits being less for single than for married men, in view of the fact that both pay the same contribution to the fund. There are minor objections as well; but these are the most serious. If workmen's compensation is to be put on a contributory basis, whereas hitherto the firm has had to meet the whole cost, the case for upward revision of benefits is irresistible. Payments under the Workmen's Compensation Acts have been grossly

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inadequate hitherto; and 60/- is assuredly none too high a rate in cases of total disablement. It would be the height of folly for the Cabinet to regard itself as in any way bound by clauses to which some of its members were parties in a Coalition they were unable to control.

Castle Bromwich and All That

If Morris's and Austin's do not want the Government factories assigned to them in the Birmingham area, so much the better. There will be no difficulty in putting them to other uses, whether the Government decides to retain them in its own hands or to leave them to other applicants. Whether they are suitable for mass-production of housing requisites we are not in a position to know; but, if not, other surplus war factories are, and the space released by the motor firms will be usable to make other factories available for this purpose. Of course, there is an unsatisfactory side to the business; for this country needs all the exports it can get, and we were expecting the motor manufacturers to achieve a large expansion of foreign sales, which are not affected by the purchase tax to which in the home market they are taking such vehement objection. As for this argument, many things are needed much more than motor-cars by the home-consumers—that is, on a mass scale. No doubt, there is a large pent-up demand for new cars, and a part of it—the business part—is urgent. But the larger part of the demand for private cars can wait; and we would very much sooner see scarce factory space and scarce workers used first for making housing-requisites or any of a good many other things, such as bicycles. The present attitude of the motor manufacturers appears to be—no cars, for export or for anything else, until the Government takes off the purchase tax. We hope and believe that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will refuse to be influenced by such arguments.

The Scientific Civil Service

In its scheme for the reorganisation of the Scientific Civil Service the Government has shown not only its appreciation of the services already rendered by the scientists but its concern to recruit the best of them for the tremendous tasks ahead. In the past the Scientific Service has been fitted, maladroitly, into the rigid framework of the Civil Service, with the same slow but secure progression through the grades; and these grades were always paid less than their equivalents in the Administrative Civil Service. Now with a substantial increase in top-bracket jobs of over £2,000 a year; with increased opportunities for scientists to reach £1,000 a year in their early thirties, and with recruitment of "Experimental Officers" from school at 18 or 19, at £3 a week, or from the universities at higher figures, Government Science can compete with University Faculties and with Industry for the best men. Even more encouraging is the general attitude revealed. The White Paper recognises that there are incentives other than security and salaries. Government scientists hitherto have worn the broad arrow of a scientific Dartmoor (though some of them made a gaol-break occasionally). Now secrecy restrictions are to be relaxed as much as possible and State scientists are to be encouraged to publish work of their own and discuss their researches with like-minded colleagues outside the Service. To allow free interchange of staffs with the Universities, thus replenishing and reinvigorating the Service Scientific Officers, the permanent staff are to be brought under the Federated Superannuation Scheme for the Universities. The Government looks with favour on proposals for such things as a "sabbatic year" on leave with pay in university or industrial laboratories, and for participation in scientific conferences and meetings. An Inter-departmental Scientific Panel is to improve liaison between Departments and with outside bodies. This is an earnest of sound intention.

SOCIALIST BUDGET POLICY

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer is much more than a Minister in charge of a Department of (financial) Supply. True, he plays in relation to the Cabinet the role of purse-bearer to the Grand Caliph: in many issues his colleagues call the tune and leave him to find the wherewithal to pay the piper. Nevertheless, the decisions for which he is responsible in the framing of Budget policy—how much money is to be borrowed, how much raised by taxation, and how the tax burden is to be apportioned—go far beyond the simple house-keeping problem of making ends meet. The Budget is a vital instrument of Governmental policy in relation to employment, the cost of living, wages and social justice; but, as such, it has to be considered not *in vacuo* but strictly in relation to the circumstances in which the nation is at the moment placed—including not merely its domestic economy but its commercial and political relations with other countries.

When Mr. Dalton gives Parliament his promised interim statement of Budget intentions, he will speak as a Socialist Chancellor; but he may not be able, in the existing situation, to act in all respects as a Socialist Chancellor would like to act. Were he to think purely in terms of abstract Socialist principles he would doubtless attach prime importance (as the T.U.C. would have him do) to correcting a capitalist society's normal tendency towards under-consumption, and hence under-employment. He would look, therefore, with anxiety at the huge war increase (from £340 millions to over £1,100 millions) in the annual burden of Customs and Excise Duties—at the £100 millions levied by Purchase Tax, the £380 millions contributed under duress by smokers, and the £290 millions exacted as practical testimony to the faith that Beer is Best. He would note with chagrin that nearly £40 millions of Sugar, Tea and Cocoa Duties stand between him and the old Radical ideal of the "free breakfast table"; and he would give due note to the consideration that £110 millions in Duties on Hydrocarbon Oils make for costly motoring and high charges in public transport.

All this indirect taxation is socially unjust in the sense that it bears no relation to capacity to pay: millionaire and Old Age pensioner shoulder the same tax burden when they buy two and fourpence worth of Excisable goods. Economically its incidence has the undesirable result that, since it enters into popular conceptions of the real cost of living, it is apt to lead to offsetting demands for higher wages—and thus higher production costs—than would otherwise be demanded. But, before yielding to his probable inclination to promise substantial relief in indirect taxation, the Chancellor has to face the fact that he is budgeting in conditions of grave and (in view of the ending of Lend-Lease supplies) possibly increasing shortage of consumer goods; that potential purchasing-power accumulated in swollen bank deposits, in Savings Certificates and "war credits" repayable to income-tax payers is disproportionately large; and that the existing inflationary trend, universal outside the ambit of rationing, might easily get out of control if cash surplus to essential needs were not "mopped up" by taxation in the case of even modest incomes. It follows that "under-consumption"—at least until man-power is adequately redeployed—is not a vice but a virtue, especially since exports to pay for essential imports must at present have priority over the satisfaction of domestic consumers' less-than-essential needs.

In these circumstances we should not expect Mr. Dalton to promise early or substantial relief in indirect taxation; the most we should look for is some lightening of Purchase Tax on clothes and household necessities. His aim, as a Socialist Chancellor, should be (1) to reduce taxes calculated to impede maximum effort on the part of labour or restrict enterprise in non-socialised sectors of industry; and (2), to concentrate taxation, as far as possible, on "free" income—*i.e.*, the purchasing-power left in the hands of individuals after their essential commitments have been met. This means that he should work, on the one hand, towards total repeal of the Excess Profits Tax—a restrictive impost for which there is no justification except in the special conditions of war-time Governmental contracts. Moreover, apart from the fact that E.P.T. is a prodigal source of tax-dodging and wasteful extravagance, there is no valid Socialist case for applying a deterrent against *corporative* accumulation. Provided that distributed profits are adequately taxed, there is everything to be said for encouraging companies to "plough back" their earnings into their enterprises—particularly at a time when re-equipment of industries with new, modernised plant is a crying need. On the other hand, the Chancellor will do well to recognise that the present incidence of direct taxation on earned incomes in the "lower brackets" is leading to widespread "go slow," and refusal, even in essential work, to work overtime. It is falling inequitably on the "essential commitment" element of earnings, notably in the case of married couples and widows with families. It follows that, whereas no case can be made out for reducing the present standard rate of Income Tax or Sur-tax (both of which form an essential method of re-distributing incomes in furtherance of Full Employment), relief should be given by way of "personal" and "earned income" allowances as soon as possible.

The speed with which Mr. Dalton can move in this direction depends on factors difficult to estimate without access to Treasury calculations and fore-knowledge of certain major Cabinet decisions. So far as 1945–46 is concerned, there will clearly be little scope for the Chancellor to play the part of Santa Claus. Even if revenue surpasses the Budget estimate of £3,300 millions, the so far slow shrinkage of war expenditure suggests that the realised deficit for the year will not fall greatly short of £2,000 millions. This figure should damp extravagant hopes of immediate concessions, though the Chancellor will disappoint reasonable expectations if he fails to produce a few "winter comforts." He might well loosen the purse-strings to the extent of (*a*) raising Old Age pensions immediately to the future Social Security level, (*b*) allowing persons over, say, 65 (whose claims are liable to be forestalled by death) to cash their "war credits," and (*c*) expediting payments on account of total loss of property through enemy action.

As for the financial years ahead, there are many incalculables. Apart from the manifest need for the assumption by the Exchequer of most of the new burdens due to fall on the finances of local authorities, the Chancellor will presumably have to cater for (and would do well to promise forthwith) substantially improved remuneration for the Crown's servants, armed and civilian. How much money he will have to find for Defence and other external commitments is represented at present by a large question mark: Mr. Bevin, as much as any single man, will determine by his policy the size of this item on the expenditure side of forthcoming Budgets. On the assumption, however, that next year's outgoings will be of the order of £3,500 millions and that, thereafter, they will gradually approximate to something like £2,000 millions, it should be possible for Mr. Dalton, without risk of inflation, to restore fairly soon the 1938 "allowances" and, well within the life of this Parliament, to reach the objective (highly desirable in view of increased living costs) of "allowances" substantially larger than before the war. We should like to see "personal allowances" raised to—Single, £120; Married, £240; Each Child, £80; and this concession should be coupled with the reduction of income tax chargeable on the first £150 over an "earned income" allowance of £300 to, say, 3*s.* in the pound.

Only when the incidence of Income Tax has been thus reapportioned, with a view to lightening the burden on financially weaker shoulders and increasing the incentive to greater efforts and earnings, should the Chancellor, in our view, turn to the reduction of indirect taxation. Not until domestic production has multiplied, and exports have been restored to a planned level sufficient to sustain our necessary imports, should he give thought to stimulating home consumption by lower duties on goods for which demand, in the economists' phrase, is elastic. But to this policy we should set one important proviso. At present, outside the range of utility goods, production and distribution of clothing and household essentials is rapidly becoming a Tom-Tiddler's ground for profiteer. If the present level of indirect taxation is to be maintained, without risk of compensatory wage demands setting up an inflationary spiral, Sir Stafford Cripps will have to secure the manufacture, at strictly controlled prices, of a substantially greater volume of utility goods. Here the Board of Trade must dance to the Chancellor's tune.

OUR EASTERN PROBLEMS

Two eastern questions, the future of India and Palestine, have entered a new phase this week which calls us sharply to attention. Both weigh heavily on our social conscience, and by its handling of them the creative capacity of the Labour Government will be measured by the public opinion of the civilised world. In India its initiative for a settlement has met with a severe check, since Congress has described its proposals as "vague and unsatisfactory." This attitude has taken us by surprise, because at the Simla Conference Congress seemed to be co-operative and reasonable. Happily it will take part in the coming elections; and, scanty though our information is, we can none the less guess at the reasons for its disappointment. Lord Wavell's conference left the deadlock between Muslims and Hindus as far as ever from a solution. What then, Indians may ask, does the British Government propose that can bring it to an end? There is in this plan, at a first glance, no new expedient. The Cripps' offer is renewed, which every Indian party had already rejected. Its form, to be sure, is no longer rigid, and the way is open for such modifications as Indians may desire. There are to be early elections and the provincial governments which emerge from them will then be consulted as to the kind of constitution-making body they demand. Does this, Indians may ask, really mark an advance? A minority of governments formed by the Muslim League will confront a majority formed by Congress, and once more the minority will refuse on any terms to compromise with the majority.

It should still be possible by a fuller and clearer explanation of the Labour Government's proposals to meet these and other criticisms. It should be made clear that the elections will really be free: we can see no good reason for the continued ban on the Socialist group within Congress, nor for prolonging the detention of large numbers of political prisoners. Again, when India becomes a Dominion, she will have, under the Statute of Westminster, the right, if she insists on exercising it, to secede. But the word "Dominion" has no magic for Indians. Why should we hesitate to use the word that touches their imagination? Let us frankly offer them "Independence within the British Commonwealth or outside it, as they may freely choose." Finally, we would ask the question: Cannot the provincial elections be used to settle the communal issue? If it were made clear in advance that a vote for the Muslim League will be interpreted as a vote for Pakistan, they would have the character of a decisive plebiscite. On this, it should be understood, we would be prepared to act. So long as it is doubtful whether the mass of Mr. Jinnah's supporters are really prepared for his extreme solution, the deadlock cannot be solved. Indians will vote with a full sense of responsibility only if we announce that we shall give effect to their views.

For the decision to refer the whole question of Palestine to the Council of the United Nations there is much to be said in principle. It is the successor of the League, from which we drew our Mandate. From it no early solution can be expected; for it is not yet in being and has no Secretariat which can make a preliminary study. Whether, when it is constituted, it will work more smoothly and more quickly than the Council of Foreign Ministers remains to be seen. Delay, if we had only the long-term political problem to consider would not be harmful: the future of the Arab States and especially their economic development ought also to be reviewed; and this calls for careful study. But the tragic problem of the Jews in Central Europe confronts us as a matter of urgency. It cannot wait until the new machinery of the United Nations is ready to function.

Some of these Jews, rescued from death in Nazi camps, are now interned in Allied camps under British and American guardianship, to the number of about 70,000. Many of them are sick; all of them are nervous wrecks; they are still underfed and are living by all accounts in conditions of physical discomfort and mental misery. Many of them are the solitary survivors of families which disappeared in Himmler's gas chambers. One hope alone sustains them—that they find a refuge and a home in Palestine. Where else can they go? Germany is for them a Hell of maddening memories; Poland, from which many of them came, is a focus of anti-Semitism, in which, as at Cracow, pogroms still occur, in spite of the good will of the Warsaw Government. There is, indeed, still in progress a flight of Jewish refugees from Poland, of whom nearly 15,000 are now in Italy. The Jewish Agency, when it asked, as a matter of urgency, for 100,000 permits for emigration into Palestine was not exaggerating the need.

Mr. Truman has, in a personal letter to Mr. Attlee, backed this demand. He has behind him both the American parties, which called for an open door in Palestine in their platforms at the Presidential election. His moral standing in this matter would be clearer had he been willing to share with Great Britain the heavy responsibility for administering Palestine. While we believe that there is ample room in that little country, now in a phase of great prosperity, for another 100,000 Jews, America's request would be more impressive had she herself opened her doors wider to Hitler's victims. She has picked many brilliant intellectuals from among them, but of the broken human wrecks she has taken only a negligible number. If she will not share with us the anxious duty of policing Palestine, there is, however, still a way in which she could give constructive help. There are means by which the Arab States may be brought to acquiesce in the settlement of a big refugee population in the Jewish National Home. All of them are backward, impoverished and under-populated. All of them, if capital were available for development, could sustain on their soil a vastly greater population on a much higher standard of life. All that is needed in Irak, Syria and Transjordan, as in Palestine, is to restore the systems of irrigation which made this the wealthiest region of the ancient world. If, with American aid, we could offer this prospect to the Arab States, they would feel less envy and less bitterness over the growth of a thriving Jewish colony on their borders.

There, then, lies the hope for a long-term solution. But in the meantime, it is surely, our duty to further the settlement of these victims of Buchenwald and Belsen in Palestine without delay. To this by the most explicit pledges the Labour Party is committed. The offer of 1,500 permits per month is a mockery of their need. If we delay, we risk a movement of desperation among the Jews in Palestine that may gravely compromise our future task. The humane course is, in this case, the prudent and the honest course.

A LONDON DIARY

I HAVE said some hard things in the past about Lord Halifax, but I gladly concede that his broadcast to the American people last Sunday was a first-rate job, nicely in line with Hugh Dalton's downright speech the night before. If the Americans believe, as some of their newspapers profess, that the toughness of the Government's line is all bluff, they are very much mistaken. The British people—and this cuts right across class and Parties—have made up their minds in this matter and would regard it as a betrayal if the Government weakened. Up at Smethwick the other day, where Patrick Gordon Walker is fighting the first of the Autumn by-elections, I was amazed at the roar of approval which greeted the suggestion that we must stand on our own feet, even if this means tobacco rationing and fewer films next year. If it goes on being tough and outspoken to the Americans, the Labour Government stands to score its first really big victory. People realise that Mr. Churchill and Sir John Anderson would have behaved very differently. Since British capitalism could only have survived as an appendage of American business, they would have made every effort to avoid bringing matters to a head and finally produced an agreement as disastrous as Mr. Baldwin's after the last war. In so doing, they would have split the country from top to bottom and so weakened our bargaining position with the States. By standing firm Mr. Attlee is rallying the whole country behind him and, incidentally, is making an unanswerable case for Labour's Five-Year Plan. What is just as important, by bringing the dispute out into the open and stating our intentions in downright terms, he is laying the foundation for genuine Anglo-American understanding.

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The other night I was talking to one of the best-informed American editors, a man of outstanding progressive views. Conversation turned to the Foreign Ministers' Conference, and my friend expressed his bitter humiliation at Mr. Byrnes' supine acceptance of the "British anti-Russian line." According to him, "Truman sacked Stettinius because he was Britain's yes-man. But Byrnes is no better. We must work out an American policy towards Russia and stop supporting these British pin-pricks in the Balkans." I listened with some puzzlement. Change the names, and you have the commonest British complaint about our own foreign policy—that it is tagging along behind the American anti-Bolshevists. We began to compare notes. Each of us had plenty of evidence to support his view and was completely certain that he was right. But one of us, or both of us, must be wrong. Thinking it over, I have come to the conclusion that both the British and the American attitude to Russia began to harden simultaneously—and independently—shortly before San Francisco. After Yalta there had been a sort of honeymoon period filled with wishful optimism which was based on very little except the "cordial atmosphere" of the Conference. But as soon as the real problems of co-operation began this year, it became clear that Roosevelt and Churchill had only achieved inter-Allied agreement by postponing or glossing over every difficulty and persuading themselves that Stalin was, after all, another Western politician like themselves. The present mood of surprised indignation is very largely due to this silly auto-intoxication which was the mode in high places both in Washington and London last winter. The State Department and the Foreign Office are suffering from the hangover from Yalta. Each blames the other, as so often happens on the morning after. The Russians have the advantage of the heavy drinker who can carry his liquor.

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A friend of mine has just been home to Tyneside after three years in America and a few weeks in London, expecting to find people in a ferment

at the slowness of demobilisation. But for Tynesiders there are many worse things than being in the Army—being thrown into a mad scramble for jobs, for instance, or being declared redundant. Returning soldiers with whom he talked were not very elated. They feel that shipbuilding cannot be maintained at its war-time level and coal-mining does not offer much inducement. That is one side of the picture. Another side was given me by D. N. Pritt, just back from the Middle East, with a most interesting account of the attitude of the soldiers with whom he had talked. Homesickness, he said, is the single outstanding fact in the Middle East; and even the slightest indication of any alteration in the Bevin plan would cause a riot. I took the opportunity of trying out on him my own pet scheme for speeding up demob. Whenever the appointed day for a particular group arrives, the men at home would be demobilised at once, and each shipment would also be demobilised, as soon as they land. In fact, everyone in the group would get out as soon as possible, without waiting for the last arrivals. This, as a correspondent this week points out with some violence, would penalise the men from S.E.A.C. So my scheme includes a special gratuity, scaled according to the time a man has been retained after the demobilisation day of the first soldier in his group. Pritt agreed that the scheme had obvious advantages because it cut down the dreary period of doing nothing which the men nearer home have to endure. But he emphasised that the troops overseas would undoubtedly feel a grievance unless the scheme was put over with a great deal of skill. He left me with the impression that the plan is worth consideration by Mr. Isaacs, and a sympathetic hearing from the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

* * *

Meanwhile I receive more and more evidence about the devastating effect of the call-up of young men. I mentioned the problem of foundry workers recently. By calling them up, Mr. Isaacs is causing the biggest bottleneck in engineering. Now I hear that large numbers of schoolmasters between the ages of 20 and 30 are also going. The new Emergency Training Scheme for teachers is only just starting. So far some 3,009 have been accepted, and the wastage in the profession is, at the moment, bigger than the intake. And this at a time when the Local Authorities are trying to carry out the Butler Act. I cannot help wondering whether the value to the Services of these schoolmasters—or for that matter, of the half-trained architects and draughtsmen and apprentices in key trades, all of whom are now being called up—outweighs their value in the job of reconversion to peace. The reason usually given for calling them up is that the holes in the Services caused by demobilisation must be made good, if we are not to have wholesale deferments, like those announced this week by Field-Marshal Montgomery. But this is not an adequate explanation. The deferment of officers was almost inevitable under the Bevin scheme, which is based on age and length of Service, since a wholly disproportionate number of officers are in the earlier groups and their removal disintegrates Army organisation. But the young men now being called up cannot take the place of the officers; they can only help to maintain the size of the Army. So the question instantly arises what size Army, Navy and Air Force the Service chiefs desire to have in the next two or three years. Judging by the call-up, it must run into millions. Is the assumption behind this that there will be trouble in many parts of the world which can only be dealt with by a conscript army? It looks as though Mr. Bevin as Foreign Secretary will have as much say in determining demobilisation policy as he had when he was Minister of Labour. Ultimately it is he who will have to justify the Service demands in the House of Commons; and there will be some very searching questions.

Frank Pakenham, who goes to the House of Lords in company with Willy Henderson, is an Oxford don, a Catholic convert, an authority on Irish history, and he has been for the last eight years a sincere and thoughtful Socialist. He stood as Labour candidate against Quintin Hogg at Oxford during the election, and he made a reputation during the war as one of the chief collaborators with Sir William on the Beveridge Report. I have always wondered whether he would have joined the Labour Party if it had not been for Sir Oswald Mosley. A friend of mine, who was with him at the famous B.U.F. meeting at Oxford which turned into a free fight, describes the scene. He says there was a thrilling scrum of arms and legs, and while he himself stood wondering whether or not to hit someone, Frank's Irish blood sent him hurtling into the fray. He was carried out with a broken head. Next day, when my friend saw him in hospital, he had become a Socialist overnight. A blow on the head is sometimes an effective argument.

* * *

Scene: A military court-martial in Hamburg. The prosecutor speaks. "You have heard the evidence of this young woman that, in violation of the Non-Fraternisation Order as amended September 1945, you intend to make her your wife." The defendant: "Whatever I may have said, sir, in a moment of some excitement, I can assure you that my intentions now are strictly dishonourable." The Judge: "You give me your word, then, that you will not legitimise the child?" The defendant: "I do, sir." The Judge: "Case dismissed." A fantasy? Of course. But a fantasy based strictly upon Field-Marshal Montgomery's last word on non-fraternisation. If you once issue a stupid order, it is remarkable where you end up. POLYCRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Mary Gilbraith.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1

Sunday, Oct. 7th, Harvest Festival. Our thanksgiving this year will be real and sincere in the knowledge that thousands in Europe will die of starvation this winter.—*Horsforth Advertiser.*

Fourteen pastors and clergymen at Blaenau-Festiniog, Merioneth, a slate quarry town of 12,000, are to tour the public houses of the district and drink with customers, but on their "pub crawl" they will consume only soft drinks.

"We are not going as spies," said the Rev. F. Williams, "our intention is to drink and chat with the people and find out what is their outlook on life and attitude to religion and why they prefer public houses to churches."

Anglicans and Nonconformists are taking part in this evangelical campaign.—*Birmingham Mail.*

Mrs. Gertrude Bray, Leeds, urged: "The energy which goes into making the atomic bomb be put into making childbirth easier."—*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.*

One 21-year-old typist reflected the Hun mentality by her disapproval of "make-up," saying it spoilt the appearance of the A.T.S.—*Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald.*

All through the night London police were combing the underworld for the three youths who escaped over this wall from Wormwood Scrubs jail, London.

Mrs. —— was picking blackberries on Wednesday afternoon when she saw a length of black rope thrown over. A wooden ladder followed, and three men dropped on to the grass in the lane which divides Mrs. ——'s garden from the prison wall.

"I thought they were dodging out for a cup of tea, and intended to go back again," said Mrs. ——. "I did not bother to raise the alarm."—*Daily Express.*

GERMANY'S PRESS

A REGULAR cortège of edicts has issued recently in Germany from the British Control Commission. Death penalty for giving the military or Hitler salute; death penalty for playing the wrong kind of music; death penalty if political parties or trade unions pursue objects other than those stated in their applications to Military Government; and a lot more death penalties. It is beginning to read like the laws and curses in the Book of Deuteronomy.

The threat of the Ultimate Sanction may be necessary and justified; it throws on the individual German the responsibility for avoiding the pitfalls of Nazism; it is also, *per contra*, a protection for him against the Nazi devices of others. It is also a summary simplification of the difficulties of control. If you have not the resources to create a new Germany or to shape the Germans in a new image, the Wrath-of-Jehovah method is perhaps the only alternative.

It is, however, negative and not at all constructive, although some will tell you that the effect of the Ultimate Sanction (implicit more often than explicit) in the Russian Zone has produced results. For instance, in their handling of the opinion-forming instruments, like press and radio, the Russians have no system of licensing, which lays down specifically what an editor or a broadcaster can or cannot do, and no directives saying they must not say this or that. Editors, to all appearances, can say what they like and, to judge from the results, they like what the Russians would like them to like.

The system of licensing, conceived by the British and Americans, was a different approach. As worked out by S.H.A.E.F. (and the practice in both Zones is based on that joint planning) it saw the free German press emerging through a series of phases: (1) *the Army-produced newspapers*, supplanting the Nazi-controlled press, and showing what objective news means and what the British or American conception of a newspaper is; (2) *the probationary stage*, in which selected Germans are allowed to produce newspapers, subject to pre-publication censorship and "operational instructions," which define pretty clearly what they are expected to do and how to avoid friction with the Occupying Authorities; (3) *the trustee stage*, in which Germans, thus tested, can produce newspapers, subject only to post-publication scrutiny, and are given real responsibility and a chance of showing that they can be relied upon to present the facts and provide a forum for opinion, and (4) *the free-for-all stage*.

But at each stage the German is supposed to know exactly where he stands and, if he is (as he should be) an active anti-Nazi of good record and has, for twelve years, been persecuted as such, he needs a period of psychological and even physical rehabilitation. He still needs to be protected against power-groups—"non-Nazis" who did well out of the regime—who are trying to muscle-in on the newspaper field. Study of this system will show that the spirit as well as the letter was sincere and helpful.

Eighteen months ago, British and American proposals were put through the European Advisory Commission for the tripartite or quadripartite running of Deutschlandsender Radio and of D.N.B., the German news-agency. Nothing came of it. Once D.N.B., that powerful instrument of the Nazis, was abolished, world-news and news of Germany, other than that which could be collected locally, had to be supplied from somewhere. The Allied Press Service, based on London, was started as a joint Anglo-American enterprise to supply world-news. It was an agency of the Governments, which pooled news from all sources, including the commerical agencies. It was, if you like, a controlled source, but its aim was fair and objective reporting, without sinister intent or subtle motives. That, like other joint Anglo-American enterprises, is now split; U.S. services are going straight into Germany, and present American intentions

are to allow their licensees to use any sources they can pick up. The British service will continue to give "pooled news."

Steps were also taken to establish "Inside Germany" news services—in the British Zone at Hamburg and in the U.S. Zone at Bad Nauheim, near Frankfurt. These were to collect news throughout the respective Zones and to exchange news between themselves. News was then to be "piped" into the German newspaper offices by radio teleprinters. These agencies are now functioning.

That is the back-history and the framework of press control in Western Germany—a fair and well-intentioned basis for an emergent German free press. But difficulties have interfered with this intention. Before its demise, S.H.A.E.F. licensed the *Aachener Nachrichten* in the British Zone. The American authorities, with thoroughness and expedition, set out to find groups of Germans, of sound character and principles, who could be licensed. They have licensed a paper in Frankfurt and are pressing ahead to license eleven of the twelve newspapers produced by their Army teams, reserving the twelfth as a zonal newspaper. The present licences are "conditional," i.e., pre-publication censorship, but the Americans want to go over almost immediately to "standard" licences, i.e., post-publication scrutiny, relying on the thoroughness of their choice of licensees, without insisting on the probationary phase.

In the British Zone, the *Aachener Nachrichten* is still the only licensed paper. All others are Army-produced and, considering that few in these teams had previous journalistic experience, I think they are commendable productions. Because of almost complete lack of personnel for the job, no reconnaissance has been done in the North on the lines of the American practice of going out and finding suitable Germans and satisfying themselves that they are capable and trustworthy. Germans are being told to apply for licences, but when they do, the problem of scrutinising their qualifications will still remain. Only trained journalists, with political acumen and knowledge of Germans and of Germany, can do that satisfactorily, and they are not available. So, in the British Zone, we have not even reached "Phase 2" in the progressive emancipation of the German press.

It may be said that the British (and the Americans) are taking too much upon themselves in insisting on this kind of selection, but it is a responsibility that cannot be escaped. Press licensees are being entrusted with the monopoly of a most powerful opinion-forming instrument; for the newsprint shortage in Germany will make it impossible for a long time to come to permit competing organs of opinion or organs of competing opinion. Four-page bi-weekly papers, on a ratio of 1-in-5 of the population, with a total weekly circulation of 9,000,000 are absorbing practically the entire output of the mills now functioning in the British Zone. Tri-weekly newspapers may be possible about December. Dailies are not in prospect. It can be argued, with justice, that political parties and sectional groups should be allowed to publish political tracts or small-circulation journals. Even then, however, there will have to be arbitrary decisions as to who shall have the right to a newsprint quota.

And that still does not affect the question how to safeguard the right of all sections of opinion—of the political groups in the local elections, for instance—to find a forum in the licensed monopoly press. These monopolies will be local, since it is proposed that the large-scale circulations of the present Army papers should be broken up, according to localities (represented at present by various editions of the main newspapers), and licensed under new titles. The object of licensing group editorial boards is to secure a fair cross-section of opinion in the direction of the papers.

This problem of finding the right people would seem sufficiently important for the Cabinet to invite selected journalists, of proper calibre, to go out on a brief mission or to appoint a Parliamentary Group of journalist M.P.s, who would have a political as well as a professional responsibility. They could get help from the Army and from the Germans themselves in making their choice. Otherwise the Army newspapers will persist indefinitely, or the licensing system (which I consider a "fair-deal" for the Germans themselves) will fail; and we may find German editors, in their difficult task of moulding the right kind of public opinion, being threatened with the Ultimate Sanction. And another capital offence will be added to the Book of Deutscheronomy.

RITCHIE CALDER

NORWEGIAN HOLIDAY

IT is dangerous to generalise about a people on the basis of a short acquaintance, but I say without fear of contradiction that, in the hungry and savage Europe to-day, Norway is nearer to happiness than any other formerly occupied country. Norwegians look at their losses, and realise that they have survived with credit, self-respect and comparatively little moral or physical damage. They are deeply grateful to the Danes, who have been persistently and unassumingly generous to them. If they find it hard to bear the rather supercilious neutrality sometimes expressed by the Swedes, they freely admit that the back door to Sweden and the goods that have come from Stockholm have been of immense benefit to them. Their casualties have been comparatively light; something over 6,000 Norwegians have lost their lives in the war—more than half of them sailors. About 60 per cent. of their airmen were killed. The country, with the exception of Finmark, in northern Norway, which the retreating Germans burnt to the ground, is not severely damaged. Bombs and explosives have shattered houses and some historic buildings in several towns, including Trondjheim and Bergen—which remains, nevertheless, one of the few Hanseatic towns undestroyed by the war. Food is scarce and strictly rationed in shops and restaurants alike; the coffee substitute is truly awesome; and tobacco is hard to come by. Some countrymen grow tobacco for themselves. ("It's not *good*," said one farmer to me, filling his pipe, "but its nicotine!") Norway's forests save her from Europe's fuel crisis, and her industries are comparatively small. Even the food situation is improving; above all, the sea, fallow during the war, is yielding a wonderful harvest. Last winter, ration-cards were often unhonoured and fats were unobtainable for months together. This winter, though life will be hard for many, I think it is true that no Norwegian will actually go hungry.

The shops are empty of all but oddments, toys and such like made of wood and paper. Paper is the one thing easier to get in Norway than in England. The worst shortage is of footwear; the shoes I saw were of deplorable quality—mostly paper, I believe—and no good at all for a Norwegian winter. Otherwise the Norwegians are wonderfully well clothed; I am told the main reason is that a peasant society always hoards clothes of good material, and in the long winters of the war (when work for the Germans was unpatriotic, anyway) the women sewed or remade, and saved their best for the day of liberation. This summer has been the sunniest on record in Norway, and the country, I was told, sometimes in accents of self-reproach, has been persistently holiday-making. One reason for this was the quantity of money available. The old notes were called in while we were in Oslo, and I met an official whose job it was to trace black marketeers whose accumulated money is no longer any use to them. But I think the main reason for taking a holiday is that Norwegians genuinely feel themselves liberated, for liberation is a psychological as well as a technical term. They are the best of friends with British soldiers, who almost without exception expressed themselves delighted with the country. But just as the British want to be home, so the Norwegians will be glad when the last foreign uniform disappears from the streets. Then liberation will be complete. The elections are coming; so is winter, and a more serious mood. But I put it on record that in September, 1945, Norway is, if not quite a gay country, something surprisingly near to it. In which, as in so many other things, the Norwegians show that they have developed unexpected sides of the Nordic character. The Germans are Nordics who have gone wrong; the Norwegians are Nordics who have gone right.

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Many thousands of Norwegians (including the Prime Minister and many other public figures) were for years in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. There is no revolting torment, from the water-torture to screws for the knee-joints and the extraction of finger-nails, that the Nazis did not practise in their Brown Houses in Oslo and Bergen. I have heard incontrovertible evidence of these things and met people whose bodies the Nazis have crippled and the relatives of many who suffered these horrors. Some threw themselves from windows to avoid the risk that they would betray their comrades under torture. Members of the Home Front tell me—with that respect for truth that characterises Norway—that few could keep silent under the extremity of torture; that no one blames those who gave way; and that the Resistance devised an information service from within the Brown House so that people implicated by confession could often escape before they were arrested. To-day you still see lorries of Germans passing with white flags in front. They will soon be gone now and no one takes any notice. Indeed, as far as I could tell, the instinctive desire of Norwegians is to forget that things like the Germans exist. They agree, if you ask, that there are many decent Germans, but they cannot feel that this is so. Their feeling has gone beyond hatred.

I heard many other authentic stories of the Nazis in Norway, where, it should be remembered, their behaviour was generally "correct" and intended to placate their Nordic kinsmen. This incident, however, concerned Slav prisoners and, I understand, it will be fully revealed at a war criminal trial. Some five hundred Russian slave workers were sent up to a German camp in Northern Norway, where a similar number of Yugoslav prisoners were already at work. As there were only food and accommodation for five hundred, the Germans on the spot had a problem to solve. The Russians worked harder for less food than the Yugoslavs, so all the Yugoslavs were shot. One needs to remember such incidents because, though they do not justify, they do explain much that is now being done by victorious Slavs.

* * *

Often during the war I have turned on the news in Norwegian at an uncomfortably early hour in the morning and wondered, as I turned over in bed, how many Norwegians were listening. It was exciting to learn on the indisputable evidence of miniature wireless sets hidden in walls and wainscots that they did, indeed, not only listen to the B.B.C., but built their life on it. We inquired persistently about the Home Front and about leaders who had picked up the arms the British dropped; others who had helped to blow up buildings and lived for years in the woods; business men who had distributed illegal newspapers and leading citizens who, unknown to the Germans, had directed these multifarious operations from respectable middle-class homes. In a surprising number of cases particularly dangerous operations were carried out in houses occupied by the Germans; they were the least likely to be searched. Every Norwegian has some war saga to tell and some may boast of greater deeds than sober history will confirm, but it is true that in Norway the Resistance was so widespread and so united that the conflict that tears other countries to-day afflicts Norway only in a very modified form.

Communist Resistance was never unified with the Home Front directed from London, but

was always courageous and, in the opinion of many experienced men, often far too reckless. In many parts of Norway the Communists and the "Official" Home Front worked admirably together, and in the concentration camps, as well as in factories and workshops, the rank and file decided to unite in a single workers' party after the war. Negotiations began directly after liberation and, after apparently nearing success, they broke down for reasons that I must analyse when, on another occasion, I discuss the coming Norwegian elections. The Communists, who have never yet won seats in the Norwegian Parliament, are now contesting on a big scale, and there is much speculation about their chances of winning perhaps four or five seats and more, about the danger that the votes given to them will aid the Conservatives and prevent the Social Democrats from winning a majority. It is a sad story; for, if working-class unity cannot be achieved in Norway, which is a real democracy of peasants and fishermen, it is unlikely to be achieved anywhere in Western Europe.

Resistance in Norway was genuinely national. The King was brave and is everywhere respected. All parties and classes were in the Home Front. Who, then, I asked, were the Quislings? The answer I got was the one I expected. They were miscellaneous people who for one reason or another were misfits, ambitious or disappointed men who had personal grudges against society. Exactly the same types led the Nazi movement and were prominent in our own B.U.F. They are rearing their heads again in England now; you can read their venomous propaganda, often with Jews as the scapegoat, in more than one unpleasant little periodical in Britain to-day. Among such people in Norway the Nazis found the usual quota of sadists and perverts who acted as executioners and torturers in their prisons and camps. One of these has already been executed and 17,000 quislings, collaborators of one sort or another, are now in gaol awaiting trial. I was present at the last stage of the trial of Quisling himself. He again is exactly to type. Facially he resembles Hitler. When I saw him he already knew the death sentence was inevitable, and he listened, if indeed he did listen, to the judge's words with the manner of a man who is not in the least interested.

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One unhappy remnant of the war greatly puzzles the humane and sensible Norwegian people. Some thousands of women who associated with Germans have been arrested and many of them have children by Germans. (A lorry load of these women passed one day in the streets of Bergen; they looked well cared for, and shouted, showing off defiantly to a completely indifferent public.) I asked who the women were. They are in three categories. Prostitutes; a few women who, chiefly in country districts, fell naturally and genuinely in love with young Germans billeted in their homes; and, the great majority, young "sillies" who would go with any man in uniform able to give them special rations and a good time. What is to be done with them? Some married; or want to marry Germans; they can go to Germany to everyone's relief. It is not clear what mates the others will find. Above all, the outlook for the children, who will be despised, it is thought, by their school-mates, is not good. Everyone agreed that the children ought to be given as good a chance as any other Norwegian children and it was hoped that homes could be found for them and their mothers among relatives, where the past may be forgotten.

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A holiday is not to read newspapers or be told about world events by the B.B.C.; it is to live for a time in an unmechanised society, small enough for people to know each other and big enough for them to escape from each other when they want to; it is to stay in towns which seem to us provincial because they are absorbed in their own affairs and to climb mountains where you may meet a herd of reindeer (as we did on one occasion) and to return to people who are sincerely pleased to see the English. The slopes of the high mountains of Norway, above the tree level, are covered with dwarf birch, which, at this time of year, is the colour of flame. The ground between the grey rocks is carpeted with tiny bilberry bushes which, still bearing purple fruit, have turned to a variety of colours, from a startling scarlet to a strange and beautiful rose madder. Add heather, an infinite number of mosses, grey, white and green, and a creeping plant of solid violent carmine (name not known to me), and you walk all day over an endless series of rock-gardens of fantastic brilliance. The snow is above you and you are never out of sight of lakes or fiords.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

MORE SHALLOW THAN YOU THINK

MR. E. H. BEARD was married on the 2nd April, 1929, and for ten years lived happily with his wife and children who, by the end of that period, numbered three. In September, 1939, the Territorial unit he had joined was embodied and later went overseas, and by the following year Mr. Beard was a prisoner of war. He was repatriated in October, 1943, and returned to his wife. In April, 1944, she informed him that she had committed adultery while he had been a prisoner. He forgave her and they lived together for another three weeks, at the end of which she finally left him and refused to return. Mr. Beard then commenced proceedings for divorce. The suit was undefended, but the petition, heard by Mr. Justice Hodson, was dismissed. The petitioner appealed. The Court of Appeal by a majority, consisting of Lord Justice Scott and Lord Justice Lawrence, granted the appeal, Mr. Justice Vaisey, the third member, dissenting. Mr. Beard's petition has become a leading case in divorce law.

The issue at stake can be put very simply. The reason why Mr. Justice Hodson did not grant a divorce on the first hearing of the petition was that, in his view, when Mr. Beard forgave his wife's unfaithfulness in April, 1944, as soon as he first heard of it, he condoned the matrimonial offence of which she had been guilty and, further, that condonation is an absolute and final thing, wiping the condoned offence for ever off the slate between the two parties. Hence, although Mrs. Beard, by leaving her husband three weeks later, committed another matrimonial offence, that of desertion, the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1937 requires that desertion shall continue for three years before a decree of dissolution of marriage can be based on it.

The reasons that influenced the two Lords Justice (but not Mr. Justice Vaisey) to allow the appeal were these. In their view condonation is not an absolute and final act. It is a conditional one. Its effect is to put the original offence into cold storage and to lock the door on it there; but, should the guilty party ever again fall from grace, the door opens and out from the refrigerator comes the first offence, as fresh and as potent as ever it was. A marriage where an offence has been committed is, legally as well as in fact, in a state of unstable equilibrium.

The importance of this difference of opinion over the effects of condonation varies. Obviously, if one spouse is prone to the commission of acts of adultery, when the other party decides that really this is too much it does not matter very much whether the innocent victim sues on the latest misadventure or one of the earlier condoned ones. But there are periods, and circumstances, in which it matters a great deal. It mattered between 1857 and 1937, because between those years it was necessary for a wife to prove that her husband had committed both adultery and some other matrimonial offence, such as cruelty or desertion, before she was entitled to a divorce, and it was sometimes very useful for a wife to be able to rely upon the earlier act of adultery which had been condoned when the second offence had occurred after the condonation. The second offence not only supplied an essential ingredient to her case. It also revived the earlier offence and, as in poker, "completed her pair." It also matters now because the offence of desertion must continue for three years before a divorce can be obtained on that alone. But, if there is, say, an earlier and condoned act of adultery, a mere bad-tempered and short-lived stay at the club may be desertion enough to revive the adultery and make a divorce petition a cast-iron proposition.

It is unnecessary to discuss whether the decision of the Court of Appeal in Mr. Beard's case is good law or not. The point is that it is effective law for so long as it remains unreversed by the House of Lords. It binds all Judges of the Divorce Court and will affect the lives and fortunes of all those petitioners and respondents who come before it with a history similar to that of Mr. Beard. And it constitutes an interesting commentary on our present-day divorce laws.

We are apt to imagine that our divorce laws are solely regulated by Act of Parliament. They are nothing of the kind. One of the major sources of light and guidance on the law of condonation is to be found in the decision in the case of *Worsley v. Worsley*, given in 1730; and of that Lord Justice Scott said, "I regard that decision, given more than two centuries ago, as of primary importance, for it covers the whole ground of the present appeal." Parliament considered some of the effects of condonation in 1857, for it is referred to in the Act of that year, but it is extremely unlikely that the M.P.s who debated the Act of 1937 and imposed the three-year duration on desertion had any clear idea of all the effects that would follow from it. The judges make a great many of our laws.

The other point of interest is the contrast between the two views embodied in the judgments of the majority of the Court of Appeal and in the judgment of the dissenting Judge. The first has the charm of cold logic. Condonation originated in the Ecclesiastical Courts over two centuries ago and its implications and characteristics were worked out there. A matrimonial offence was a dreadful thing. If a spouse was reckless enough to forgive it, surely he, or she, ought not to be placed in a position in which they could never refer to it again? Once a thief always a thief was a sound rule in marriage, and a man or woman who broke their marriage vows on one occasion was obviously a type who would be prone to do it again sometime or other before he (or she) died. So, say the Lords Justice, the qualities of condonation having been defined in 1730, they remain effective and binding in 1945.

Mr. Justice Vaisey took a different view. To him condonation ought to be, and in fact was, a complete re-consummation and re-consecration of a marriage. "'Let us not refer to this again,' would be their thought, 'Let things be as if it had never happened,'" he says in his judgment, ". . . Such a purpose as I have attributed to the parties would be praiseworthy, and I do find it very hard to believe that the law is compelled (with what seems to me to be incredible cynicism) to frustrate it." Otherwise, as his Lordship said, matrimonial hatchets are buried in very shallow graves.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

When someone's happy in a house, there shows
A chink of honey-coloured light beneath the bedroom door
Where once a thunder-purple gloom oozed out across the floor,
And even the stairs smell like an early rose.

FRANCES CORNFORD

RADIO NOTES

SUCCESSFUL clowning is crude, slapdash, utterly unexpected. Rapid as a swallow—or as the Scherzo of the Ninth Symphony—it cannot afford to show us a face not horrified in the wrong places by vermilion and chalk white. The eyes alone remain, like Falstaff's, untouched by art; catching them as they flash between the trellises of fantasy, we shiver momentarily, as when a grey goose passes over our graves. All laughter is backed, sooner or later, by fear; so the wild amusement caused by the clown is always seasoned by a grain of dismay, which is blown into the air before it can take root. A disappointment with fear, the clown's act turns our minds inside out with the nimble instrument of impure nonsense—which is also pure poetry. Impure, because that which it reflects in its concave mirror is everyday truth. Clowning has nothing to do with nostalgia or any other form of romanticism: its poetry is at only one remove from reality. Thus Tommy Handley (need I remind you that the new series of Itma started last week?) is not an actor—he does not interpret character—but a succession of crises, balanced on the edge between a glory and a ludicrous despair. He is the moment when we see our train moving out of the platform, already just too fast for us to jump on to it. He is the sneeze that fails to materialise; the moment of exasperation in the crowded restaurant ("I want the waiter with the water for my daughter"); the buzz-bomb that passes safely over us; the swing that goes full circle; the blind that won't fly up straight; the waistcoat button in the wrong hole; the jug handle that comes away in our hand; the valentine, the Existentialist, April 1st. This is the kind of vitality which the comic scenes of Shakespeare communicate, though the humour of these has gone—as Tommy Handley's too will go—with the wind. The pace is breathless, and if you want to miss nothing you have to listen with the attention you might otherwise give to a string quartet by Max Reger. Not that it matters much if you do miss something: there is plenty more where that came from. All of which adds up to the suggestion that Itma, even when not at its best (as it unquestionably was last week), is in a totally different class from the rest of radio Variety. Which is not as it should be. But where, oh! where, has Mrs. Mop got to?

If rapidity and *non sequitur* are the soul of Itma, they have no business to be the soul of "How." I have the distinct impression (voiced once before in this column) that if Stephen Potter does not take in canvas drastically, this valuable series will run on the rocks. "How to Make Friends," like "How to be Good at Music," squandered a deal of excellent material on a bewildering number of short sequences which all broke off, leaving one in the air, before one had had time to seize what they were about. At the end of the programme I felt as if I had been walking for half an hour with both shoelaces undone. These broadcasts are, after all, concerned with technique. They must make a series of smaller points which add up to a large one. The laughter they evoke ought afterwards to cross-fade gently into reflection; and to this end the means of Variety do not lead.

I thought it very sporting of West Regional to broadcast Rheinberger's Mass in E major. This is exactly the kind of originality which the regions can afford themselves. Of course, Rheinberger was not a first-rank composer; and listening to this Mass, which is among the last of his two hundred odd works, the ear becomes cloyed by the monotonous sweetness of the Spohr-like harmonies, which exclude every element of surprise. But the perfection of the writing, the frequent charm of the ideas, and (has on Sept. 19th) extreme beauty of singing, make the work well worth an occasional hearing. I wish the choir and organ of St. Mary Redcliffe, at Bristol, which performed the Mass, would give us some of the lesser known works of Parry, and even some sixteenth-century polyphony. They sing like angels. It was likewise a treat to hear Lennox Berkeley's enchanting *Divertimento* again. Why have we never been allowed a second performance of this most individual composer's Symphony? The New London Orchestra, under Mr. Alec Sherman, gave a rendering of the *Divertimento* (as also of the "Linz" Symphony and a Sinfonia by J. C. Bach) which, by its sharpness and vitality, impressed me by contrast with the dead-alive quality of nearly all the symphony concerts that are broadcast nowadays. Who shall awake our instrumental players so that they *stay awake?*

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*September 30th.* Interludes from *Peter Grimes* (3.17); "Ruthless Rhymes for Heartless Homes" (9.30).

October 1st. "Man in Society—1" (7.30); The Hippolytus of Euripedes (9.30).

October 2nd. Harp and Soprano (Marie Korchinska and Mary Linde, 9.0 a.m.); "What is a Christian Country—1" (10.10 p.m.); Recital, Denis Matthews (10.35).

October 3rd. Recital, Denise Lassimonne (L.P. 1.0); Symphony Concert (Thibaud, 7.30).

October 4th. Recital, Antonia Butler and Emelie Hooke (3.30); Symphony No. 3: Darnton (7.15).

October 5th. "White Bread or Brown?" (7.30); *Consuelo* (10.0).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Story of G.I. Joe," at the London Pavilion
"Strange Incident," at the Academy
"Berlin," at the Tatler
"Painted Boats" and "Ten Little Niggers," at the Tivoli

Nobody who has seen William Wellman's *Strange Incident* (revived at the Academy) will be surprised to learn that his new film, *Story of G.I. Joe*, is remarkable. The same qualities of realism and high tension are directed again to group action—in this case a company of men driving towards the enemy in the desert—and again there is an onlooker, half-participating in events. Ernie Pyle (Burgess Meredith) is a newspaper correspondent in his forties who gets taken along, too; his readers, one may be certain, never lack truth or suffer a surfeit of I's; and such, I gather, were the qualities of the real Ernie Pyle, who received a Pulitzer prize and was killed in Iwojima. However that may be, this commendably brave and modest reporter forms the necessary link between us and reality. Not that he relates; we hear his voice murmuring once or twice over the typewriter, that's all; he never shines, though his story does. He introduces by his presence, as does the reluctant witness of lynching in *Strange Incident*, a point of view essential for conveying inflections of irony and pity. Neither film could do without its intermediary. For the first half hour, indeed, of *Story of G.I. Joe* it seemed as though Wellman were going to repeat his earlier pattern, confining himself to the single phase, the desert battle that, for Sidney Keyes, was the symbol of war; and such a film, as sketched here in silences and premonitions and the first casualty, would no doubt have been impressive. But the story goes on. Tunisia is left behind for Italy; the thinned ranks are reinforced; Ernie Pyle gets to know his comrades and to be accepted by them; the southern glare is followed by rains; one battered town succeeds another; and the expression on the faces hardens, the worst is yet to come. Cassino, with the monastery bell tolling and the shells pouring down. No possibility of replying. One man—the sergeant—goes mad. Decisions are reversed, Cassino is bombed and finally stormed. On the road to Rome, while the company falls out, mules approach in the dusk carrying the bodies of the dead, among them that of their captain. He is laid by the roadside and one sees the white wooden crosses on a hill while the men move away in silhouette. We remember the words of Ernie Pyle, talking once to this same captain: "No one knows what it's like. . . . Up in the sky they die well-fed and clean-shaven. But the infantryman—he lives miserable, he dies miserable."

So far as the whole truth of war can be shown to us in one film, it is shown in *Story of G.I. Joe*. Its masterly realism, its grip on irony (the shot sniper sliding down the bell-rope which rings for several moments in the gutted church after he has fallen), its jaunty talk and underlying anguish, its development of character and incident set a new standard in war films. This is not only the best war film, but a further indication—if any were needed—that the future of the cinema lies, primarily, in imaginative realism.

Berlin is a Russian documentary of attack, more ruthless therefore than its predecessors and, now that the issue is decided, less inspiring in its message. The concluding tribute to Stalin, though deserved, lacks spontaneity, but this may be due to an English commentary which throughout is flatly rhetorical. Another documentary, *Painted Boats*, depicts the nomad life of bargees and the English canal system. I enjoyed the poetic quality of this film, directed by Charles Crichton and written by Louis MacNeice, though feeling at times that the beauty of water and tree and smoke-stack had put a glaze on human nature. The trouble with this kind of documentary, which we do so well, is that it hints a story, it gets a little way inside characters, but how unsatisfying that little can be! *Ten Little Niggers* in the same programme is a neat version of Mrs. Christie's preposterous and enjoyable thriller, directed by René Clair. There must be two M. Clairs.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

EXHIBITIONS

A room at the gradually reopening Victoria and Albert has been devoted to portrait-sculpture—including Pisanello medals, Quattrocento and Baroque busts, Regency miniatures in wax. Admiring the vigour and penetration with which for four centuries great artists have delineated individuality of character one wonders why they are now so seldom attracted to this task. Can it be that totalitarianism has so much seeped into all our lives that we are already in a new Middle Age, and that artists are therefore no more interested in personality than they were in the thirteenth century? Also at the V. and A. is an American exhibition designed to interest the public in contemporary art by a series of reproductions with explanatory notes. This can be recommended to the attention of those who are trying similar methods of education here, but the taste revealed is uncertain. Why choose to reproduce a picture by Beckmann of all artists? And the note on the painting called *The Blind Bird* reads like Beachcomber at his most extravagant.

The Leicester Galleries with 164 caricatures by Max Beerbohm from the late Mr. Guedalla's collection offers a rare gala to all of us who are enthusiasts for the "incomparable" and "the inimitable." Never has venom been darted from more sinuous elegant coils. (Sir Max might take to himself Valéry's "le serpent que je vêtis.") He is possessed by an urbane disgust, an almost sacred horror, in the face of assertiveness, complacency, and bad taste: how exquisite his exposure of a Kipling, a Solly Joel, a Bonar Law. And four generations of the Royal Family have served to provoke his tartest effigies. Then there are the evocations of the Nineties in which nostalgia and fellow-feeling suffuse, without diluting, his wit. Meandering, moreover, in nooks of many drawings there are shy rills of clerkly hand-writing which reveal once more Sir Max handling English prose with a fineness now unparagoned.

Also at the Leicester Galleries is a roomful of pictures by Miss Dorothy Annan. These are painterly but not otherwise very interesting. The trouble to-day is that the easel picture monopolises the energy of many artists, highly skilled and tasteful who in earlier ages would have excelled in some less exigent form of painting. It is as if writers found no demand for prose and had all to set themselves to compose verses. Similar reflections may occur in front of Frederick Porter's posthumous exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery. Here was an artist, thoughtful, accomplished and compact of integrity, who nevertheless fell short in realisation. Imaginative power is required in an easel picture—by which I mean not necessarily a romantic power to transcend appearances but the concentration that gives to the realist work of Chardin or even Jan Steen an indefinable intensity. Frederick Porter is at his most delightful in direct transcriptions from landscape, but a deeply considered painting called *Through My Window* reveals his power of composition.

ROGER MARVELL

Correspondence

DEMOBILISATION

SIR,—During the past few weeks the Admiralty has demobilised from the Navy, long in advance of their turn, a considerable number of its own clerical staffs who, as civil servants, were called to the Colours. It has done this by completely ignoring the official demobilisation scheme and by defying a strict Government Order, issued some months ago, to the effect that only individuals with special qualifications were to be considered for return to Civil Service posts, even under Class B, and that every such case must first be approved by the Treasury and by a Committee presided over by Lord Kennet before being submitted to the Ministry of Labour.

In the first press statement issued by the Admiralty in defence of this grossly irregular action it was stated that the Department was short of experienced staff. Having presumably had second thoughts, and realising that every other Government Department, as well as scores of thousands of private employers, was in the same position, the Admiralty issued a second statement in which it referred, with complete irrelevance, to the number of Admiralty staffs who are serving in civil posts overseas. It failed to mention that, throughout the war, it has been able to retain a higher proportion of men of military age than any other establishment, governmental or private, in the country.

The improper action of the Admiralty will doubtless be dealt with elsewhere. In the meantime it is interesting to reflect upon the contempt for public opinion which the Admiralty's action reveals. No subject contains more explosive material than that of demobilisation. No Department at all sensitive to the prevailing feeling in the country would put itself in a preferential position, *qua* employer, as the Admiralty has done, least of all a Department which is retaining in uniform many thousands of men who are demanding to get back to civil life. But the Admiralty, regardless of the effect of these irregular releases upon the morale of the men who are entitled to earlier demobilisation, puts its own civil servants back into their peace-time jobs under conditions for which there is no provision whatever in the official demobilisation scheme. One of the men released under this arrangement, whose case was mentioned to me the other day, is being returned to the Naval Construction department. Presumably the urgency is due to the necessity to get ahead with ships for the next war!

The circumstances of war have encouraged some Departments in the belief that what the public thinks is of no importance and can be safely ignored. The Admiralty is one of them. Our sense of gratitude for the tremendous achievements of the Navy should not allow us to make the mistake of allowing high Admiralty officials to continue in this dangerous belief.

Civil Service Clerical Association. L. C. WHITE (General Secretary)

SIR,—"Brasshats," or more accurately staff officers, are to be found in large numbers at every H.Q., and most notably at H.Q. B.A.O.R. (formerly 21 Army Group). At the end of the war with Germany many more appeared, who had been rendered unemployed by the dissolution of S.H.A.E.F. Staff officers are not stupid. It was immediately obvious that they either had to prove that their existing departments continued to be necessary, to create new ones, or lose their appointments with a consequent reduction of rank.

Thus began the process of "Empire Building." To do the job effectively, the staff officer should have good contacts at the War Office, especially in that department which sanctions new and amended War Establishments. The semi-secrecy that surrounds the Intelligence Corps makes this a suitable playground for some of the more blatant of these ruses. "Security" prevents exposure. To give an example. One Intelligence Staff, which did extremely important work at the height of the campaign, had a staff consisting of one lieut.-colonel, two majors, and two captains. It now has one full colonel (very astute ex-S.H.A.E.F.), three lieut.-colonels, five majors and six captains! The new tasks of this department (for its real reason for existence ceased with the defeat of the German army) are three in number, each of which is duplicated by another organisation. It could be wound up to-morrow and never be missed. All its lower ranking officers speak German, which they are not using, while there is an acute need of German speakers elsewhere.

It is obvious how such rackets, if widespread, can delay demobilisation. For behind their facades high-ranking officers can urge the War Office not to be too "precipitate" in releases. Already there are strong rumours that Intelligence Officers' releases are to be deferred beyond their age-groups.

What is the solution? There is only one—the appointment of a number of intelligent, independent investigators with wide powers to comb out all existing staffs. The mere fact of the appointment of such investigators would cause the hurried winding up of many of these "rackets."

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, B.A.O.R.

SIR,—In your last two issues to reach me, I have read with grave concern of proposals to defer release of men in S.E.A.C. beyond the date when their more fortunate brothers in countries nearer England obtain their Class "A" release. I have yet to hear a more callous, unjust suggestion which, when advocated by your paper and also by responsible trade union leaders such as Mr. Charles Dukes, has created a very bad impression amongst the "few score" (?) men in S.E.A.C., a theatre of operations which has consistently received the worst treatment of any during the war.

Are the Service men in S.E.A.C., who very largely voted for a Labour Government in the hope that they would then receive a certain measure of justice, to be compensated for long service overseas, without home leave or the amenities given to the Services in Europe, by a few miserable shillings, while the more fortunate Service man in Europe returns to civilian life and has the pick of civilian jobs?

The only solution possible is to give demobilisation and repatriation from this theatre top priority in shipping and air space. If your scheme is adopted it will be the crowning insult to armies which have worked under far worse conditions than those in Europe by a nation whose attitude has always been that those who are farthest away can be most easily forgotten.

J. H. PURSEY, Lieut. R.E.
47 Ind. Bomb Disposal Pl. I.E., S.E.A.C.

SPAIN

SIR,—In Mr. Bevin's recent parliamentary panorama, touching upon our relations with Spain, he made it clear, to the obvious relief of the Franco Government, that as a matter of principle he would not support direct intervention in Spanish affairs, as he believed that this would have an effect the opposite to that intended.

I do not believe that any such principle exists, and that although there may be good reason for not undertaking unilateral action, there is good cause for withdrawing diplomatic representation from the last surviving government brought into being by Hitler and Mussolini, and advocating to the other Powers the use of economic, and if necessary military, sanctions against the Franco Government.

The case for intervention in such circumstances was well put by Mr. Gladstone, many years ago, when demanding in the House of Commons intervention in the Balkans. He said:

> If a country has a tyrannical government and you substitute for it a free government, you make what I think a very great improvement. I bring it to the test of history. Look abroad over the

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JONATHAN CAPE

face of the world, and you will find that few are the nations which have, in recent times at least, established their own liberties without foreign aid. Liberty was established for Spain by England in the Peninsular War. The same was done for Belgium by France and England in 1830. The liberties of Greece and Italy were established by the aid of foreign arms; in the case of Italy by the arms first of France and then of Germany. The liberties of Portugal were, if not established, yet preserved by Mr. Canning in 1826, and by the use of foreign arms. The liberties of the United States themselves were only established, at the date when their emancipation took place, by the powerful aid they received from foreign arms. That proposition vanishes entirely into thin air. So much, therefore, for the twin propositions—that coercion by Europe means war with Turkey, and that liberties of a country cannot be established by the aid of a foreign force.

Non-intervention put Franco in power; non-intervention is keeping him there.

DONALD CHESWORTH,
Labour Candidate, Warwick and Leamington Division.

ENEMY ALIENS

SIR,—I should be much obliged if you would allow me to make a few more remarks about "Aliens," as I feel that your correspondent has overlooked some important points.

I, ———, swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George the Sixth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me.

This is the oath which I, a German Jewish refugee, had to take, when I volunteered for the British Army in 1939. We have all done our duty loyally. We have made sacrifices, some of us the supreme sacrifice. When my offer of military service was accepted 6 years ago, when I was asked to take the oath of allegiance, I felt proud. I knew I was trusted and accepted into the community of British soldiers. What crime have I committed that, after my demobilisation, I should be reduced to the rank of Enemy Alien? I was trusted to bear arms on your side, and, after taking my oath of allegiance seriously, I cannot get used to the idea of being an "Alien" again. Quite frankly, I do not see why I should. Surely people have been granted British citizenship for less than what we have done.

"ONE OF 5,000"

SIR,—One of my colleagues in a specialist Army unit in Germany recently was a young captain, who, when I asked him if he were going to vote at the Election, told me sadly, "I haven't a vote—you see, I'm an enemy alien." He had been brought to England as a child in the early days of the Nazi terror; he was educated at an English public school, enlisted in the Pioneer Corps, was later commissioned in a famous infantry regiment, was wounded in France, and then, in view of his being bi-lingual, was trained for and given a very responsible post in the administration of Occupied Germany. He speaks English without trace of an accent, and his German origin is unsuspected by most of his associates.

Surely the bitter feeling of frustration and injustice under which he and many like him are working (I think particularly of those young anti-Nazi Germans and Austrians in this country who were arrested in the panic days of 1940 and shipped under shocking conditions to Australia or Canada and who later volunteered for Army service) should be removed by the grant of British citizenship.

35, Argyle Mansions, GEORGE E. KAMM
London, S.W.3.

REPATRIATION OF ANTI-NAZIS

SIR,—"Critic's" news that Sir James Grigg's policy of keeping German anti-Nazi prisoners of war here and sending back to Germany unregenerate Nazis has been reversed is good and very welcome.

We would wish very much that the Foreign Office, which has received in June from the Free German Movement in Great Britain a list of about 600 anti-Fascist refugees in this country, will now permit their return to Germany where every healthy, competent anti-Nazi will be needed in the coming hard winter months.

As it has been possible to repatriate German prisoners of war and civilian internees from the Isle of Man it should not be too difficult to find means of transport for some hundreds of Germans who are friendly to the Allied Nations and know British mentality. They would be an asset for British Military Government and a strong help for their German comrades who want them to return. A number of anti-Nazi refugees is already returning from France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and Sweden.

Free German Movement HANS KAHLE,
Belsize Park, N.W.3.

THE PLIGHT OF THE DEAF

SIR,—Thank you for publishing Professor Levy's timely article on "Expensive Aids." Owing to the law of trade libel and most newspapers' reluctance to risk losing advertisements, it is almost impossible to get any publicity for the sad plight of the deaf. It is reckoned by those best qualified to know that there are about 4,000,000 people in this country who are hard of hearing and would benefit by a deaf-aid instrument. At present the showrooms of about half-a-dozen firms cluster round Oxford Circus with a force of high-pressure salesmen to persuade deaf visitors to buy costly apparatus. Deaf-aids in London cost from £15 to £25. In the provinces they may cost twice as much (under a different name) and they are all provided with special batteries which are very expensive in upkeep.

The Medical Committee of the National Institute for the Deaf has been asked to put on the market a hearing appliance to meet the needs of "deafened persons unable to afford high-priced instruments." Their idea is to manufacture about 10,000 instruments to sell at £10 10s. with a battery maintenance of 2s. 6d. a week for 4 hours' daily use. One can only remark that an American radio firm produces an excellent hearing aid (preferred by many to anything made in this country) for 40 dollars, and its battery upkeep for 4 hours a day is claimed to be under 6d. a week. A friend of mine who is a radio expert recently examined a £15 15s. hearing aid and told me it could be assembled as it stood for about £3 17s. 6d., and that it could quite easily be made to take standard batteries in common use instead of expensive special cells. He said that if mass-produced it would, of course, be much cheaper.

The present neglect of the deaf is a disgrace to this country. People seem unable to understand the misery of a deaf man's life. His disability is not only physical, but mental.

All who have been concerned in the purchase of hearing-aids must agree with Professor Levy that "we have here a case for drastic reform." Hearing-aids are unsightly (the deaf are curiously sensitive about this), inconvenient, costly to buy and costly to maintain. Radio experts and first-class physicists should be invited to interest themselves in the matter instead of aurists and amateurs with profit motives. I am doubtful if hospitals are likely to prove the best distributors of deaf-aids. The large multiple chemists would seem more likely to meet the case, if they can be interested. I hope that our new Minister of Health will be able to do something about it.

H. P. GARWOOD

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE brilliant "New Judgment" of Anthony Trollope by Elizabeth Bowen, which has recently been re-broadcast, is primarily an attempt to account for his astounding wartime popularity; she suggests that the clue is to be found in his treatment of the "ordinary." She explains the almost exaggerated ordinariness of the best-known novels by the circumstances of Trollope's youth, when he, a gentleman's son, shut out by poverty and misfortune from all a gentleman's comforts and expectations, first as a wretched schoolboy and then as a "wistful outcast" in London, indulged longing dreams of success, position, well-being and assurance: he "yearned for the ordinary, like a lover." From the force of these dreams he described with loving care what he had missed, and in manhood came to enjoy what he described. A young man on his way to battle, in a dream-dialogue with Trollope's shade, finds in the novels "a support against the sort of hopelessness we are inclined to feel," an admiration for characters who go all out for what they want and keep such a flag flying if they don't get it, people who are stronger than circumstances and yet are ordinary. And he adds: "We *long* for what's ordinary." So much is in the dialogue: but, concluding in her own voice, with that sceptical and detached prudence which marks all her criticism, Miss Bowen speaks of "a mirage of the ordinary." If it is a mirage, were Trollope and his modern reader both deceived? is ordinariness not really like that? or was it then, but is not now? or is there nothing ordinary under the sun?

If other listeners who, like myself, have enjoyed the Trollope craze and heard this note of fundamental doubt beneath Miss Bowen's purposes, need aid and refreshment in deciding what she meant or in considering again, from her suggestion, what sort of novelist Trollope was, the proper guide is most happily at hand: for Mr. Michael Sadleir has brought out a new edition of the book on Trollope* to which all his readers since 1927 have owed so much. He is far too discreet to mention the ephemeral wartime boom; he has changed very little his matter or his opinions; but he has revised the whole book with a bibliophile's care, pruning and tightening the style, so that it is now in effect a fresh contribution to a taste for which its earlier editions did so much to prepare. Here are the data for resolving the first part of Miss Bowen's problem—whether the ordinariness was a mirage even for Trollope—and many wise and partial verdicts which will help to decide if it is a mirage also for us.

The simple fact must be admitted that most people in the war were uprooted, tired and overwrought and did not want adventurous, stimulating or difficult reading: that was the context of Trollope's appeal. To begin with, his style, or lack of it, is so easy; for it is impersonal, competent writing rather than a style, and this was what he aimed at and admired; it is sound, clear and unembarrassed, as free of unconscious individuality as of conscious art. All his critics have always agreed on the extraordinary naturalness, fidelity and ease of his dialogue: he is at his very best where any individuality of style in the author should least appear. Also he is never allusive or elliptical; he explains everything with minute and elaborate care, often to the point of labour; but he is not often dully discursive. So he demands remarkably little effort or attention.

> "One of the qualities," said the *Saturday Review* in 1873, "to which Mr. Trollope owes his success . . . is his unwillingness ever to write above the capacity of his public. He is aware, or he instinctively assumes, that the ordinary English novel reader is above all things a person of indolent mind."

Next, wartime readers wanted to relax and to be amused; and Trollope was the last considerable novelist who avowedly wrote (was indeed left free by the temper of his age to write) most of his work with the straight motive of making money by amusing people who wanted to relax. In his heyday the status of prose fiction was still very indeterminate, and it was his contemporaries, rather than he, who moulded the future. The Eighties' outcry against his *Autobiography* was a protest against his derogatory view of his own "art": as Miss Bowen's Trollope says: "It made 'em wince."

Dickens, Disraeli, Trollope's mother, and others had done much to foster the idea that fiction should be taken "seriously"; he himself was liable to revert to sociological and reformist subjects which belonged more to his mother's generation than his own. He was, for instance, blamed for his critique of legal ethics in *Orley Farm*. For by the middle Fifties (how well Mr. Sadleir describes the characteristics of mid-Victorian prosperity!) it had become a generally accepted canon of criticism that a novel was not the proper place for airing opinions on social reform. The fear (by no means irrelevant now) was expressed that if novels dealt with "subjects" the half-educated would tend to form their opinions from them, and there would be a lowering of intellectual standards.

Subjects excluded, what then was left for a "serious" novelist? Roughly, that he should entertain educated people with stories illustrating character, true to real life and inculcating, without preaching, sound morals. The great practitioner of such fiction was Trollope's hero, Thackeray. "A novel," he said in his book on Thackeray, ". . . in matter should be moral and amusing. In manner it may be realistic, or sublime or ludicrous;—or it may be all these if the author can combine them." This does not now strike us as a critical judgment of great insight or depth, but I cannot agree with Mr. Sadleir that when Trollope speaks of a moral purpose in his own fiction no modern reader can take him very seriously, that it is "merely another example of the influence of his period on his method of self-expression." If you take away the moral purpose, what standard is left to try the quality of the amusement? for he had no conception of an aesthetic purpose to put in its place. The fact that he is often tolerant and almost cynical about actions which his contemporaries might condemn shows, not that he had no moral purpose, but that he had slightly more generous morals. One might as well say that Mrs. Gaskell's *Ruth* had no moral purpose. Trollope would never say a novel ought to preach; but its very essence was to display in realistic action the worthiness of some, the unworthiness of others, and the worth of all. Miss Bowen makes Trollope say of Dr. Grantley: "The Archdeacon—a bad, bad man . . . I can pass no judgment, you know, on the Archdeacon . . . The world with its rewards and its penalties is to be respected." Such respect, even such restraint of judgment, belong to the moral sphere; so does Lily Dale's rejection of Johnny Eames. It was this conception of a refined moral purpose, rather than any amoral appreciation of realism for its own sake, that made the critics and public of mid-century take prose fiction seriously at all; without it Trollope would have been torpedoed; it is hard to think that he would have written any novels.

The point is also relevant to ourselves and to Miss Bowen's problem about "the ordinary." There is no doubt that the typical Trollope characters of the central period—Eleanor Bold, Mark Robarts, Lord Lufton, Mary and Dr. Thorne, the Dales—were taken by contemporaries to be astonishingly lifelike (indeed Signora Vesey Neroni was solemnly objected to because she was not); they were "the common run of those we see and know": the ordinariness was complementary to the realism. If it was a mirage, readers and critics in the best position to judge were deceived. In every novel such characters are shown in some kind of moral dilemma—choice of husbands; points of social honour about money, reputation, ambition or love; conflicting loyalties. The standards by which they decide, and even the kind of evidence they admit in deciding, are shared or at least understood by the whole society in which they live; even when they waver, they don't rat or appeal to foreign codes. The processes of their deciding are really what the novels are about. But their motives, the facts they consider, the methods by which they reach a conclusion—would these be ours? Are these people, in fact, ordinary also to us?

The answer must be: No. They are part of recent history; we met some of them in our youth; they are our grandparents or our great-great aunts: we can enter into their dilemmas and understand the processes of their thought, but these are emphatically not our own: they are woefully incomplete. With some of the older wartime readers there may have been an element of regretful desire for the Trollope world, for remembered remnants in their own youth; but for most of us, I think, the fascination lay in being absorbed in a distinct and full social world, which, though thoroughly intelligible, was quite self-contained and did not impinge at all upon the thoughts and problems of the present: it was a marked, defined and interesting experience of something essentially different.

It is doubtful whether the typical wartime love of Trollope extended beyond the middle and Barchester period to his work as a whole; for in his later books, when, as Mr. Sadleir so well explains, the social conditions of his peculiar success had vanished, he developed a new manner. In *The Way We Live Now*, instead of the quiet, balanced moral sympathy towards his characters and towards life as a whole, there is a strain of strident feeling and even disgust. The people are more flamboyant, the plot more melodramatic and of wider scope. It is a measure of his real greatness as a portrayer of manners that in this latest phase his power of visualising his characters in the round and of hitting off their talk did not desert him. It is a restless, searching book, revealing, with the usual slow Trollope deployment of detail, something of that unquietness of the heart that has been the typical mood of our own age.

A game is often played, I believe, among Trollopians, of discussing who is their favourite among his women. The contest is usually between Lily Dale and Mary Thorne. For purposes of wartime reading, I join Mr. Sadleir in his Mariolatry. But surveying the whole field, when immediate thirst for the Barchester spirit is allayed, I find myself thinking of Winifred Hurtle. It is interesting to note that in the lay-out for the novel, when others' characteristics are given in some detail, nothing appears about her but her name. It seems as if this beautiful woman, competent to face the world alone, fundamentally wild, yet assured, capable of great tenderness and heroic generosity as well as of passion, grew in stature as he wrote, in spite of his disapproval. He felt forced to make her American; he tried hard to make her vulgar, but he failed. She belongs to a world of fiction in which deeper analysis and greater freedom begin to suggest that "the ordinary" is further to seek than had once appeared, and that at certain periods and for certain purposes a mirage does better duty in its place.

In the social atmosphere of the Seventies the methods and implications of French fiction came to be better understood, demanding both a more exacting research into the springs of behaviour and a less restricted field of action. Even earlier, and quite independently of any foreign influence, cracks had begun to appear in the varnish of the formula "moral and amusing," and in the theory of selective realism which was its complement. Trollope, considering "the sublime" more proper to poetry than to fiction, where "it is apt to become cold, stilted and unsatisfactory," was already outmoded when he wrote; a reviewer of *Rachel Ray* (1863) had cried out for a new fashion in fiction to "take us to something more

* *Trollope: A Commentary*. By MICHAEL SADLEIR. *Constable*. 10s.

exciting and poetical." The view was gaining ground that prose fiction had claims to be considered a kind of imaginative literature of comparable dignity to poetry. The *Cornhill*, which started in 1860 with *Framley Parsonage*, was in 1874 serialising *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

HUMPHRY HOUSE

THE ARAB LANDS

East is West. By FREYA STARK. *John Murray.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Miss Stark spent the War in Government service in the Near East. (I use the phrase in the old sense: if Palestine and even Tripolitania are the Middle East, where are we to look for the East that is Near?) Her new book describes her experiences—at Aden, in the hermetic Yemen, in Egypt, and in Irak, where she was besieged in the Embassy after Rashed Ali's *coup d'état*. She also revisited Syria, Palestine and Trans-Jordania. She writes in an agreeable style, and with constant good sense—a virtue not always conspicuous in English Arabophiles. The general reader will therefore find in her book no less profit than enjoyment.

A principal theme, as the title she has chosen suggests, is the permeation of most Arab lands by Western ideas, customs and techniques. English enthusiasts for Arab civilisation have usually been romantics, who because they justly admired in it a dignity that we in the West have long since lost, deplored indiscriminately every form of European influence. Miss Stark, on the other hand, not only accepts what is inevitable, but welcomes it and devotes herself to making its effects good. Democracy, she declares, is "radical in the Arabian way of life, whether they know it or not"; and one of her methods of countering enemy propaganda was to inspire a society called "The Brothers and Sisters of Freedom" for the discussion and pursuit of democratic ideals. She shows by various instances how these ideals are proving fruitful in social work of a sort previously unusual in the East, where almsgiving rather than personal service has been traditional.

She dedicates her books to "My friends, the young Effendis," and she is enlightening about this novelty in Arabic society, a middle-class trained in the Western way for the Civil Service and other professions. But we are left a little uncertain about the usual relationship between the Young Effendi and his poor, uneducated neighbours.

> The Arab virtues . . are warm and human and not very official virtues. To be hospitable and polite in the extreme, to give money for the good of one's soul regardless of its destination, to further the welfare of one's family and friends: these are excellent virtues, but if anything they are embarrassing rather than otherwise to a young bureaucrat.

This is the nearest that Miss Stark's courtesy allows her to come towards discussing the temptation to which an educated minority is always exposed, and especially in lands like Egypt where the governing class has for centuries abused its power.

The book is packed with wise comments upon the Arab world. Its unity, as Miss Stark points out, is one of language, largely (but not entirely) of religion and of civilisation, not of race. In history it represents "the greatest commercial empire between the fall of Rome and the rise of Britain." This Empire was founded on security of transport; and to-day the Arab lands (except to the West of Egypt) are important to us as a region of transit. We need peace in these lands, but not control of them; and this interest of ours happens to coincide with the interest of the inhabitants.

And here we come to the difference between British and French policies in the Near East. Anglo-French misunderstandings have been aggravated by the indiscretion and misconduct of officials from both countries. But even if there had never been any English in Syria, French rule would be unpopular there. For the French colonial ideal is to transform the natives into Frenchmen enjoying the rights and liberties of Frenchmen. In no sense a base ideal, but one towards which progress has been slow, chiefly perhaps because it is an ideal difficult, if not impossible, to realise. Miss Stark shows how successful the French have been in communicating their ideas. She thinks, indeed, that in this respect their influence may be more permanent in the Near East than our own. But, she continues in her discussion of the Frenchman:

> In other sorts of building he has a future filled with obstacles, particularly in Syria. He has been pursuing an old-fashioned policy, the exploiting of a zone of influence in which the population tends either to become assimilated and deteriorate, or to rebel; he has been doing this in Syria, which is, as it were, a small island among lands where for the last twenty-five years Britain has been trying out a new policy of advice and suggestion, with as little interfering as possible; this means constant adjustment, frequent bad government, and a great deal of friction over the exact measure of interference, but it *stimulates*, and its result is beginning to appear in an *active* friendliness among the Muslim peoples.
>
> There are arguments for each of these systems, but they cannot work side by side.

I wish that this diagnosis could be made known to the French public, which blames upon British Imperialism troubles that in fact are due to the British having in these countries abandoned Imperialism, at least in its older and crude form.

On another burning question Miss Stark is equally deserving of the most serious attention. She is generous in her praise of Zionist achievements in Palestine, and counts among her friends eminent Jews in that country who are undisfigured by exclusive nationalism. Here is a part of her comment on the present situation there:

> This is no controversial work, and I have no wish to enter the Palestine arena or take up any position beyond the very simple and fundamental one that it must be wrong to make any country accept immigration *by force*. The people of Palestine, after two thousand years or indeed longer, are attached—like all Middle-Eastern peoples—to their soil; and they have already admitted close upon half a million Jewish immigrants within the last twenty-five years. The Arabs now number roughly two-thirds, the Jews one-third of the country, so that in proportion of populations the Jewish immigration would correspond to sixty-five millions in the United States. If America *had* admitted sixty-five million Jews, or Gentiles, or indeed Angels, all in one lump in less than thirty years, and it were proposed still *to coerce her to keep her door open*, it is easy to imagine what her reaction would be. The Palestinian reaction is exactly the same . . .
>
> Even for the Zionist himself, for whom one has great sympathy, there is no eventual alternative to Arab conciliation but failure. In a notch of a country surrounded by totally Arab lands which are growing every year in capacity, self-consciousness and geographical importance, the choice is between a friendly compromise and eventual expulsion. British or American bayonets might force the issue for a time, but not for very long; and it seems to me that the fact to remember about Palestine is that there are *only two* alternatives—agreement or force.

Those who are persuaded that it is morally right to force emigrants upon Palestine, even to the point when they become a majority, usually maintain also that the resistance to this would not be very serious. Miss Stark's view, however, cannot be lightly dismissed.

Is it for her great knowledge that one most admires Miss Stark, or for her quick eye, or for her sound sense or for her good heart? She has a quality even more endearing, a quality seldom found in authors, and to-day rarer than ever before: she writes as if she were happy. She seems perfectly adapted to the life she leads, and this psychological healthiness (which never shows itself as insensibility or heartiness) gives balance to all her judgments and, I feel sure, makes her effective in every work to which she sets her hand. It is a proof of the vitality of Arabian civilisation that it has gained so wise and discriminating an admirer.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

KEYSTONE OF PLANNING

Building and Planning. By G. D. H. COLE. *Cassell.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

If Professor Cole were the chairman of the National Housing Commission which he invites the Government to set up, some millions of families in this country would have reason to feel happier, for in this his latest book he is writing of practical issues, on a subject he knows—in the very literal sense of that phrase—by heart. His book is learned and interesting; to readers who are bewildered and worried by housing and planning problems, it is exciting, in the same way that a comprehensive and detailed scheme by Professor Patrick Abercrombie is exciting. It differs from other books on planning and housing because Mr. Cole tackles the fundamental problems of economic planning, which are essentially national and international, and relates to them the problems of physical and local planning. He demonstrates the key position of the building industry in the post-war economic and social structure, and summarises the results of his labours as Director of the Social Reconstruction Survey organised by Nuffield College, and his own intimate knowledge of the building industry, in a table giving a tentative estimate of a twelve years' building programme. This estimate, which, as the author says, can only be approximate, is most valuable. The programme covers current housing needs and arrears, educational, commercial and industrial and public building, repairs and maintenance and temporary building. It is arrived at after the most careful examination of requirements and the possibilities of attainment, including a valuable chapter on apprenticeship, training and recruitment in the building industry.

Since the book was written, the war has ended with a Labour Government in this country, and the secret of the release of atomic energy has been discovered. The fact of a Labour Government means that there is a real hope of economic and physical planning, of implementing the recommendations of the Uthwatt Report, and perhaps the Barlow Report (though here the opposition of local authorities is formidable), and of a control in the national interest of the supply of building materials; more important still, control in the interests of the community of credits and interest rates. It would be encouraging to think that the Government would initiate a National Building Corporation as well as a National Housing Commission on the lines Mr. Cole suggests, but at present there is no sign that they intend to be so enterprising. The atomic bomb, at first sight more remote from the present subject than Socialism in this little corner of the world, probably has a profound effect on the industry, location of factories and houses, and the finances of this and every other country, because it is bound soon to affect the whole of the armaments and allied industries. If this means, as it should, a vast release of productive man-hours and machinery, Mr. Cole's calculations are none the less useful, and his arguments are strengthened.

In one respect, however, his calculations may be challenged. As an economist of vision, Mr. Cole looks ahead. As a research worker in the building industry he tends to look back. He gives it as his considered opinion that the greatest part of our house building will be, so far as the shell of the house is concerned, in traditional material. He concludes—and here he may be mistaken—that the method will be that of placing one brick on another in the open air, though in future operatives must have a guaranteed week, and be paid for "wet time." Mr. Cole may be right in thinking that the permanent building will be largely in traditional materials, but he leaves out of account new methods of precision building in slabs of brick, or stone facing, put together under factory conditions. If such methods are in general use—and the saving of time involved is a most important factor—they will have a profound effect on the proportion of skilled and

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unskilled labour in the industry. This may be deplored, like the disuse of other skills, but the prefabrication of components for permanent building is a likely development.

Whatever adjustments may be needed in Mr. Cole's calculations—and he will be the first to admit that there may be some—his book is a masterly analysis of the present position and potential of the building industry and a clear and convincing statement of the urgency of national planning.

IRENE T. BARCLAY

DETECTION

The Rising of the Moon. By GLADYS MITCHELL. *Michael Joseph.* 9s. 6d.

There's a Reason for Everything. By E. R. PUNSHON. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

Time to Change Hats. By MARGOT BENNETT. *Nicholson & Watson.* 8s. 6d.

The Murderer is a Fox. By ELLERY QUEEN. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

The Applegreen Cat. By FRANCES CRANE. *Hammond.* 8s. 6d.

The Seven Who Waited. By AUGUST DERLETH. *Frederick Muller.* 7s. 6d.

What does the public want to know about detective fiction that it can't find out for itself by reading the stuff? When the B.B.C. recently collected a brains trust of leading detective writers round a microphone to answer questions, most of the enquiries were about real crime; only two had any bearing on the writer's art. One gentleman wanted to know the difference between thrillers and detection; and another what good there was in reading detective stories. Miss Dorothy L. Sayers gave the stock answer to the first question:—That thrillers are mere blood-and-thunder, while detection is an intellectual contest between author and reader. Long ago this used to be true; but, since Edgar Wallace, thriller-writers like to include an element of detection in their melodramas. The identity of the Big Shot of the gang is generally sprung as a surprise in the last chapter. I should say the distinction nowadays was one of style and emphasis. The thriller style tries to emulate the burst from a tommy-gun in rapidity and stridency, while the emphasis is on acts of violence and brutality. The detective style is more wary and catlike, with the emphasis on the motives for murder rather than the actual murders. If ever you meet a chapter of long-winded recapitulation you may be sure you're reading a detective story. To the ethical question, what is the good of detection, some strange replies were elicited from our eminent authors. Hamlet was claimed as a detective story; and Aristotle's justification of high tragedy was put forward. Well, well! With Macbeth on our shelves, ready to purge us of our emotions, why have recourse to Lord Peter Wimsey—surely the mildest of aperients? Then someone trotted out a list of good men who had enjoyed detective stories, from President Wilson to Lord Baldwin. There again, good men may smoke, but does that prove the good of smoking? The truth (of which no one need be ashamed) is that detective stories give pleasure and provide a relaxation from the struggle with the refractoriness of daily life. Dealing with the more malleable material of fiction, the process of logical deduction proves infallible; and the triumph of reason is a reassurance of our own sanity.

Miss Gladys Mitchell, whose recent fancy work has been a menace to sanity, deserves to head the list on her resumption of normal detection. A very spry schoolboy of thirteen tells the story in *The Rising of the Moon* with great gusto. In a nameless riverside town not far from London, a mass-murderer gets to work on girls during the full moon. The criminal is so obvious that it hardly requires the tardy arrival of Mrs. Bradley to elucidate the business. But the infectious enthusiasm of the narrative ought to give any reader a genuine run of excitement. When Miss Mitchell chooses to stick to the realm of probability, the special flavour of her style is irresistible.

There's a Reason for Everything with Mr. Punshon, if not always a convincing one. On this occasion the reason is a missing Vermeer, which brings a bunch of art experts buzzing round Bobby Owen. The picture is supposed to be hidden in a haunted, deserted mansion, where a pool of fresh blood, discovered at midnight, shows that dirty work has begun. As, for once, the characters are not all at cross-purposes, the solution is fairly easy, provided the reader knows as much as Bobby Owen about identical twins.

Time to Change Hats is uproarious fun, superimposed on a neat detective plot. Miss Margot Bennett will be a valuable recruit to detection, if she can go on inventing plots to sustain her comic effects. In a humorous English village, containing a prima donna, evacuees, refugees, and a delightful police sergeant by the name of Partridge, an Australian adventuress is found shot in the local Colonel's study wearing the Colonel's hat; while shortly before the Colonel himself has been shot, also wearing his hat. The hats are crucial; and I hope I give nothing away by revealing that "time to change hats" is as conclusive a clue as the famous "incident of the dog in the night time."

The new Ellery Queen title, on the other hand, is grossly misleading; but I shall not say why. *The Murderer is a Fox* purports to reconstruct the poisoning of Mrs. Alvin Fox twelve years before the story opens. Alvin Fox has been convicted of the crime on circumstantial evidence, and has been languishing in gaol under a life sentence until Ellery comes along to play good Samaritan. The solution is questionable, to say the least of it; but a rich mixture and supercharged style are supposed to cover the defects in the argument.

Pat Abbott is one of those broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped, American detectives who never puts a foot wrong—a monotonously impeccable type, generally with an authoress at the back of him. Miss Crane arranges a couple of stranglings in a palatial Thames-side country house for him to clean up in *The Applegreen Cat*. The weakness of the psychology is compensated for in the slick determination of the writing.

The Seven Who Waited waited for an old gentleman to die after a stroke; they were his heirs. Then they began to get warning notes and die off one by one. This is an elementary story for beginners with a foregone conclusion—just the thing to give one a good night's sleep.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

A CRIME DEBUNKED

The Lyons Mail. By SIR CHARLES OMAN. *Methuen.* 8s. 6d.

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but the Lyons mail, like the Brest mail and others, bumped over the roads from one posting-house to the next unprotected, and took passengers without much investigation. There was a good trade in false identification papers. So few were the difficulties in the way of the robbers that they merely posted one of their number on the coach when it left Paris, a silent, surly man who pulled the brim of his hat over his eyes in the most blatant criminal tradition; and then rode on to their ambush at leisure, stopping at many posting houses on the way and freely enquiring what time the mail would pass. And after the attack they went back to Paris, returned their borrowed horses, and dealt with the usual "fences." Not surprisingly, two or three of the robbers were pretty quickly caught; and two others had the impudence to attend the court at the first trial when they were recognised by witnesses who had spoken to the mysterious horsemen on the Melun road. We say "recognised" and there lies the root of the subsequent fame of this crime. One of the recognised visitors to the court produced an impressive alibi; the other produced a fraudulent one. It was this man, Joseph Lesurques, a young black market speculator, whose innocence or guilt was disputed for years by lawyers and pamphleteers long after he had been sent to the guillotine. The Victorian melodrama, *The Lyons Mail*, is a romantic travesty of his story; in fact the Lesurques of the play is nothing like the Lesurques of the crime, and the question of his part in it, if he had one, is still unsettled. It is one of the conundrums of detection.

Sir Charles Oman has turned to this puzzle. He has gone through the tedious mass of evidence, he has reconstructed the affair, he makes his own judgment. The reader of detective novels will be refreshed by reality; but he will be disappointed by the lameness of the plot and the obstinacy of the problem. The affair of the Lyons Mail is less a mystery of guilt and innocence, than a peculiar journey in the capricious climate of popular feeling. The law hates to admit it is ever wrong—that would be bad public policy—on the other hand, the public morbidly loves to believe the law is rarely right; the criminal, always an actor, exploits these rival emotions to the utmost. Enquiry after enquiry decided that Lesurques was justly guillotined; but the doubt has never quite died. In considering the evidence under Sir Charles Oman's careful guidance, one must be struck at every stage by the confusing part played by human cussedness and *amour propre*.

All the criminals were not tried at once. The surly passenger on the mail coach was not in fact arrested for some years. But all in turn denied that Lesurques had anything to do with the robbery. He maintained that he was the victim of a confusion of identity; and in fact he had a very close resemblance to the underworld king Dubosq, who was long afterwards shown to have organised the robbery. But confronted by Dubosq years after Lesurque's execution, the original witnesses swore, with one exception, that they had not confused Lesurques and Dubosq. That looks to me like mass face-saving on the part of the witnesses; like the criminal, they had become actors too. Sir Charles says we must accept their evidence; and indeed Lesurques made an appalling mess of his alibi which turned out to be not merely a lie but a swindle. The various trials all show one thing: that the criminals of the period had come to behave with remarkable effrontery. It is not long after this time that the famous Vidocq rose from the underworld to become Chief of Police.

Vidocq does not come into this story; but a part, rather resembling his, is played by Dubosq, the most famous jailbreaker of his time. Dubosq was a wit and a philosopher, a great actor and a very humorous character. His escapes bear comparison, as technical exercises, with some of the escapes from prison camps in the war. In one attempt he broke both legs and was retaken; but he so ingeniously deceived the doctor who was curing him that he was at last able to make a successful breakaway. In a delightful letter to the doctor he writes: "When business permits it, I hope to send you a fuller testimony of my thanks." The Dubosq episode is, indeed, more interesting than the problem of Lesurques whom the theatre has palmed off as a good man foully wronged. But I doubt whether the exiguous material of the Lyons mail mystery was worth a full-length book.

V. S. PRITCHETT

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

VERDI: *Requiem Mass.* Maria Caniglia, Ebe Stignani, Beniamino Gigli, and Ezio Pinza, with Orch. and Chorus of the Royal Opera House, Rome, cond. Tullio Serafin (H.M.V. DB6210–19).

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 97 in C.* London Philharmonic Orch., cond. Beecham (H.M.V DB6222–4).

MOZART: *Quintet* for Horn, Violin, 2 Violas and Cello, *in E flat* (K407.) Dennis Brain, with members of Griller Quartet (Decca K1138–9).

WEBER: *Invitation to the Dance.* National Symphony Orch., cond. Fistoulari (Decca K1108).

NICOLAI: *Overture: The Merry Wives of Windsor.* Liverpool Philharmonic Orch., cond. Maurice Miles (Col. DX1201).

SULLIVAN: *Overture di Ballo.* City of Birmingham Orch., cond. Weldon (Col. DX1200).

OFFENBACH: *Overture: Orpheus in the Underworld.* Detroit Symphony Orch., cond. Krueger (H.M.V. C3431).

CHOPIN: *Waltz in C sharp minor, op. 64,* and *Mazurka in B flat, op. 7.* Jose Iturbi (H.M.V. DA1849).

CHOPIN: *Fantasie-Impromptu in C sharp minor* and *Waltz in D flat,* op. 64. Jose Iturbi (H.M.V. DA1848).

It is pleasant to have little but good to say of this new set of the Verdi *Requiem*. Though it was made as long ago as 1940, the level of recording is not much below that of the finest recent issues made in this country, and the acoustic, to which insufficient attention is often paid, even when other circumstances are carefully considered, is here especially good; the voices ring powerfully, but have no echo. The balance between the various forces, which must have been particularly difficult to achieve in this instance, is excellent; and the recording itself is perfectly comfortable. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the music itself. Scarcely anywhere in his work, and never so completely, did Verdi keep up so high a level of sheer inspiration. The writing is incomparable, the themes never less than beautifully expressive of the emotion, the passionate musicality astonishing; in fact, there is not a dull or feeble page in the entire work. The only slight blot on a brilliant performance is the tendency of Maria Caniglia to go flat on her high notes. Gigli's stylistic vagaries cannot be described as blots, and in any case they are seldom in evidence here. These records can be bought separately, and those who cannot afford the whole set at one go, are strongly advised to collect it gradually—movement by movement.

The symphonies composed for the London concerts of Salomon are generally considered the crown of Haydn's work; and this, the first of the set, would be wholly delightful but for a rather superficial first movement. To be sure, it contains some lovely incidental detail—especially the contrapuntal passage for wind instruments; but the opening theme is pure stock-in-trade—the kind of thing any composer of the classical period might have scribbled on the

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back of a laundry list while waiting for his coffee. But the slow movement (in variation form) is ravishing; and—as usual—Haydn has a surprise for us in the Trio of the minuet. The recording is a little disappointing, after the recent triumphs of H.M.V.; without being positively disagreeable, it has an American coarseness and will not stand much volume.

There need be no reservations about the music of the Mozart Quintet. It has all the charm and strength of his maturity, its deceptive ease and fluency. There is no sadness here—none of the composer who, perhaps more than all others, loved life yet found it a poor thing. The beauty of the slow movement is vocal: it is in effect an aria, with cadence phrases that remind us of the operas. The performance is admirably sensitive, with a wonderful display of virtuosity by Dennis Brain. The recording is good, but not outstanding.

The latest issue of the *Invitation* employs Berlioz's orchestration in preference to Weingartner's—a good thing, since the latter is needlessly elaborate and in some places vulgar. This is rather a good recording, from the acoustical point of view; but the performance is uninteresting. The conductor's attitude to the whole work is on the heavy side, and his management of the waltz itself rhythmically most unattractive.

The three overtures that follow have a good many qualities in common, but the only one that need concern us here is high spirits. Mr. Miles achieves a vital and harmonious rendering of Nicolai's hardy perennial. The latter part of the piece is really too noisily scored for the gramophone, and here I think the old Beecham recording was perhaps more successful; but the new disc is cheap at the price. Musicians as a whole are, I find, contemptuous of Sullivan's early *Overture di Ballo*, but personally I cannot see any reason for snoot. Composed in 1870, five years before *Trial by Jury* (first of the Savoy operas) and three years after Sullivan's discovery of the lost *Rosamunde* music of Schubert, this unpretentious overture is full of charming tunes and beautifully scored. The performance has the unobtrusive accuracy characteristic of that excellent young conductor, George Weldon. What more can you want, in this kind of music? Most people will want more from Offenbach's delicious overture than the latest issue affords. This is indeed a most horrible record, crude and perfunctory in style, dreadfully shrill in reproduction. It is also otiose, in view of the existing record conducted by Constant Lambert, which is excellent.

Artists who go to live in America rarely survive the peculiar atmosphere of that strange continent. Actors and producers are invariably ruined by Hollywood; many musicians by New York. What has happened to Iturbi, who used to be one of the most elegant and impeccable of European pianists? Partly, no doubt, one should blame the American recording system, which is particularly hard on the tone of the piano. But that would not account for the utter lack of sensitiveness in touch and rhythm which makes these renderings of Chopin so painful to listen to.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 818

Set by Sam Smiles

"Is bad taste anything more than the offence which is caused to stale minds by fresh minds?" (St. John Ervine). The usual prizes are offered for a similar defence (in the form of a rhetorical question) of avarice, gluttony, rudeness, incest, nagging, boasting, snobbery, ostentation, tactlessness or making bad blood. Entries by Oct. 9.

Set by John Lilburne

A recent B.B.C. news bulletin announced that the Nazi war criminals are to be provided with "wholesome and improving novels" whilst awaiting trial. The usual prizes are offered for a chit from a Military official (of 200 words), stating with reasons, what novels should be supplied to two of the prominent prisoners now in Allied hands. Each prisoner is allowed only one book.

Report by John Lilburne

I expected a flood of replies: a muddy trickle came in. Either the competition was too simple and failed to stimulate enthusiasm, or it wasn't clear what I wanted. I was surprised to find Isherwood's *Good-bye to Berlin* didn't creep into more than one entry on the strength of its title. One competitor offered Goering a novel called *My Friend Harris*. I regretfully disqualified him as I was unable to verify its existence. But it was a bright idea. I liked J. R. Till's second entry which awarded Herr Krupp a copy of Graham Greene's *Gun for Sale*. I recommend two guineas for Prodd, a guinea for Allan Laing and half a guinea for Granville Garley.

Your Ref. 52 H(b) DT569.
My Ref.: 46962 19A 9(Of) 653.

SUBJECT: READING MATTER FOR W.C.'s

On the recommendations of this conference I have approved the short list subject to the following amendments. Delete authors 18–23, *i.e.*, from incl. Wells, H. G., to incl. Hanley, J., and authors 39–44, *i.e.*, from incl. Moore, G., to incl. Dell, E. No. 46, James H. should read "No. 46, James H. (less *What Maisie Knew*) and No. 51, Chesterton, G. K., should read "No. 51, Chesterton, G. K. (less *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*)." Deleted authors are NOT wholesome. None of the members of the conference were familiar with the works of No. 59, Woolf, V. He (? she) will consequently remain suspended subject to reinclusion when I have considered a synopsis of this author's stories which you are requested to compile and despatch earliest.

I have selected for immediate reading by W. C. Goering, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, by Burnett, F. H., as providing lessons in demeanour and deportment for persons called to a high station in society, and *Black Mischief*, by Waugh, E., for W. C. Streicher as illustrating a society not infected by Nazi principles and free from racial prejudice.

PRODD, CAPT.
for Brig., O.C., No. 6548 W.C. Detn. Unit.

No. 6548 W.C. Detn. Unit.

Welfare Officer,
7894 Sub-Area.

I am instructed by General Giveham-Hell to say that the request of the prisoner Streicher for a copy of *Ivanhoe* is to be declined, not only because it reveals British military strategy, but because the General is convinced the prisoner merely wishes to gloat over the sufferings of Isaac the Jew. It its place, General Giveham-Hell recommends that he be given a copy of *Eric: or, Little by Little*, the wholesome, public-school atmosphere of which cannot fail to correct, in some measure, the prisoner's unfortunate foreign education and upbringing.

You will also be good enough to inform the prisoner Goering that no novel entitled *Emmy* can be traced here, but the General suggests that probably *Little Women* or *Good Wives*, by Miss Alcott, should meet his case. The General learns on the best authority that both these works are devoid of violent action and impropriety of word or deed, and that they are calculated, moreover, to exhibit our great American allies in a most favourable light. ALLAN M. LAING

A copy of *Jack Sheppard*, by Harrison Ainsworth, is to be made available for the use of the prisoner, Goering.

NOTES:

(1) Perusal of this book may encourage the prisoner to attempt an escape.

(2) Prisoners attempting to escape are to be shot at sight. GRANVILLE GARLEY

Company Meeting

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Taking into consideration the difficulties brought about through shortage of labour and materials, he thought that the results could be considered satisfactory.

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Personal

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